



THE VOYAGE OF  
THE KAIMILOA



# THE VOYAGE OF THE KAIMILOA

*From Honolulu to Cannes via  
Australia and the Cape of Good  
Hope in a Polynesian double canoe*

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## Chapter I

### THE MOLOKAI LEPER HOSPITAL

26th October 1935

I OPEN my eyes slowly; how heavy eyelids can be, at times!

I am in a small room, very white, very cool; a nurse with fair hair is bending over me, she smiles; an American doctor, tall and lean, with a Pravaz syringe in his hand, is smiling too. "Everything's O.K.," says he. Another doctor, pink-faced and cool, Chinese, but an American all the same, places on my side-table something to eat. I have eaten nothing for nearly a month; I endeavour to twist my body on the bed, to see. I would have loved a nice beefsteak; there are only two small pieces of toast, minute, and a cup of tea!

"Above all," counsels the tall, lean doctor, "don't eat it all: a small mouthful every ten minutes, no more!" I look at the Chinese doctor. How well I understand my cannibal friends of Papua! What fine cheeks that little doctor has!

I nibble a bit of toast—my jaws ache, it's so long since they have done any work! Ten minutes later I tackle another bit:

"I may eat the lot now, may I not?"

The Chinese doctor removes the tray:

"No, not yet, if you wish to live!"

What a strange sensation those crumbs of food, those mouthfuls of tea cause in me! My eyelids feel less heavy, I can see more clearly what has happened—the tragedy

of the last few days. I close my eyes: everything passes before them in the form of pictures. Is it possible? Is it not a nightmare?

I ask:

"What about my mate?"

"He's all right!" says the fair-haired nurse. "Better than you are! He will probably be able to get up presently!"

I think to myself:

"Yes, I know! He must be better than I am—poor devil!"

"What about the *Fou Po*?"

"Your little junk is still there at her anchorage, where you left her, last night. You'll see her from the window of your room to-morrow when you are able to get up."

I smile! The tall American doctor was right, everything's O.K.!

Another American enters. What vitality he has! I recognize him. Why, of course, it was he who, last night, at the second trip of the canoe, was escorting the natives.

"You did not want to leave your ship," he reminds me, "so I came along and I carried you off; you weren't very heavy!"—he bursts into a pleasant laugh—"there was a heavy sea running: they nearly broke you in two when they landed you on the pier!"

They leave me alone: I am to rest, to think of nothing! Easy to say! I would like to eat a bit more, a tiny bit, but they've taken away the last piece of toast.

I hear sounds of singing in the distance, half-sacred, half-joyful songs. Sacred songs are often so sad! Who can be singing hereabouts? Lepers? It can only be lepers, for Kalaupapa is their preserve. Apart from the

doctors and the hospital staff, the place is but a large leper village. I was well aware of it, when yesterday, in order not to die at sea, I decided to come and anchor in that roadstead. Lepers, their sort eat, I had thought, but I never would have believed that they could sing too!

To think of nothing, that's easy to say: when, behind your closed eyes, you see images passing with such realism, it is as if you lived them all over again!

I see myself leaving France in 1927, answering again the call of the sea and the allurements of the mysterious Pacific. I did so want to fill my life, to make it worthy, in my own eyes, of having been lived!

I see myself arriving in China. Why in China? Because it was the threshold of the Pacific; to seek adventure; my landing, as a first-class passenger from the *André-Lebon* of the Messageries, on the Bund of the great city of Shanghai, with a wealth of courage and hope—but with a paltry hundred and fifty francs in my pocket.

Like a serial film, pictures pass before my closed eyes. How strange was my life in China, in part a double, even a treble life among my only Chinese friends, a life half official, half secret, with the ever-harrowing goal, the only goal: to get together enough dollars to enable me to realize my dream: start off to conquer the Pacific and its mysteries.

Then the building of my first junk, the *Fou Po I*, a proud ship of 40 tons, so beautiful, so well-fitted out, so well provided with instruments; then my first disappointments—the difficulty of raising a crew, the mistrust of the authorities of my own country, who did not understand that one might want to rove about the Pacific in a junk, have a strong desire to study its



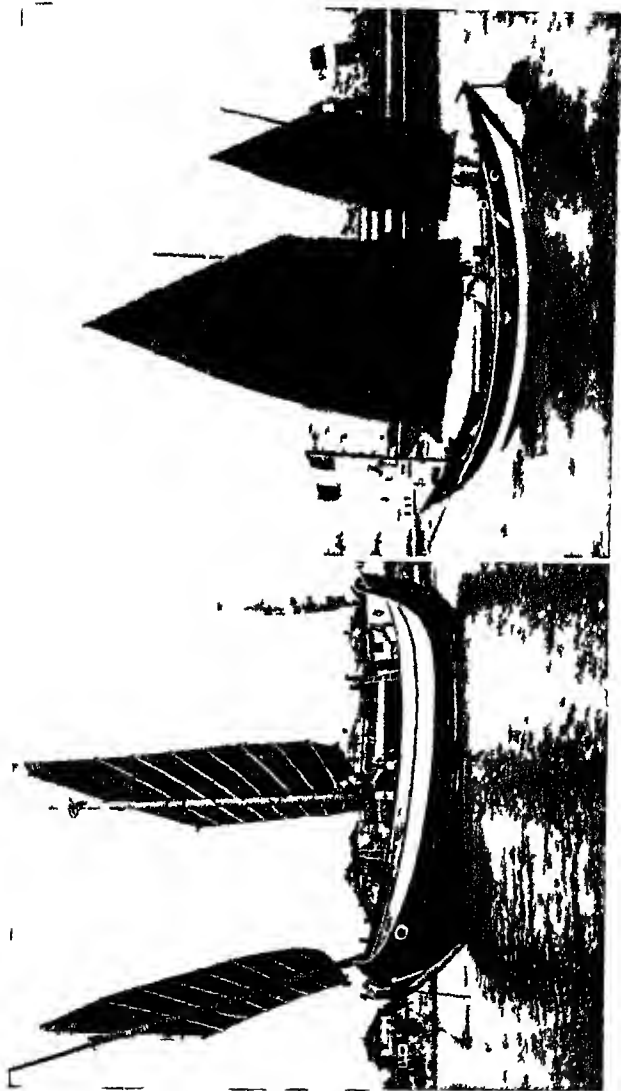
mysteries, and who had decreed that I was merely affiliated to a secret pirate organization to carry out opium smuggling! Sailing up the Yangtse, from Shanghai to Hankow—over 1,000 kilometres of river; I had been so proud of having, the first among Europeans, achieved that supposed *tour de force*; sailing down again, the departure from Shanghai for the open sea . . . the typhoon . . . the exhausting struggle: five days and five nights, alone at grips with the hurricane, Tati and I. My temporary crew, three young Russians picked up in the streets of Shanghai, crouching at the bottom of the boat, helpless from seasickness! The tragic arrival on the reefs of Formosa, and the anchors which might have saved us from shipwreck, dropped in haste by Tati, without his having thought of fixing the stocks beforehand; had he confessed this to me, we might perhaps have been able to trip them one after the other, and to anchor again? We might perhaps have been able to save the beautiful ship? Then the wreck, the pirates swooping down upon us from the mountain like birds of prey, looting everything, cleaning out the derelict in a few hours and leaving us, naked and ruined, upon the bank.

Then the return to China: Amoy. The building of the *Fou Po II*; this time, only Tati and I as crew!

Ah! how proud I was when getting under weigh: less than three months after the loss of the *Fou Po I*, to have built the *Fou Po II*, and to dash off anew in conquest of the Pacific!

The brave little junk! What things she had seen in three years! What perils she had managed to get through . . . mangled, doubtless, but ever victorious over the snares laid by the sea and by men!

I think of the dreaming hours which I spent in studying the equatorial counter-current east of the Philippines,



*Left* THE "FOU PO I" WAS A BEAUTIFUL JUNK OF FORTY TONS  
*Right* THE "FOU PO II" LEAVING AMOY



ARRIVAL ON THE AERODROME AT HONOLULU

There is nothing to remind us of the tragedy of "Fou Po II" but  
our emaciated bodies.

south of the Caroline Islands, then later in the vicinity of the 180th degree; rectifying the position of islands inaccurately charted, looking for lands formerly glimpsed, but now disappeared, studying the races of men we met. I live again joyfully those seven months spent among the Papuan cannibals of the Prurari Delta. Ah! what fine fellows! Then more tragic recollections. But we won through: God was looking after us!

And the last place of call of the *Fou Po*, at Jaluit, yonder, in the Marshalls. Ah! the ugly faces of that Japanese Governor and of those policemen, with their little daggers at their sides. . . . Spies! We? What a joke! Some note-books showing positions, a few survey notes on the north coast of Australia . . . that's not spying! Kept prisoners for a fortnight, watched closely all the same . . . the natives threatened with imprisonment if they approached our craft; and that searching of the *Fou Po* whilst we were being questioned ashore; just think, a wireless transmitter, an electric sounding apparatus must be hidden somewhere. Maybe I had thrown everything overboard before landing, but they'll find the traces all right . . . everywhere, anywhere . . . under the planking, amid the provision tins . . . the fools!

And our departure? only just managed it, luckier than that American, a year ago, than that Englishman, six months ago! . . . disappeared, both of them . . . poof! dissolved into thin air, for the greater glory of the Mikado's Empire.

The flight to Honolulu, thousands and thousands of miles to the north-east, not very much for a steamer, but for a sailing-ship . . . and above all for a sailing-ship like the *Fou Po*, which cannot resist prowling about mysterious currents. Then, after a month and a half of sailing, the tragic discovery: a smell of putrefaction in

the forward hold: the soldered spare cases of food in a state of fermentation: the Japanese of Jaluit had also searched in there for the wireless transmitter and the electric sounding apparatus: they might have informed us. We would have re-soldered everything: now the damp has caused the rice to ferment, eaten away the flour pastes, and the damaged flour is alive with maggots. Everything overboard! everything overboard!

Then the inventory of the remaining provisions: half a score of odd tins . . . with over a month of sailing ahead . . . if all goes well! And what then? What? Poor Tati, he has repented now!

"You asked for it," is his first thought, "so much the worse for you; die then!" But there comes a day when there is nothing to eat aboard, nothing for him! He too sees the approach of death!

And what then? His confession, and what a confession! I can see his feverish eyes fixed on mine: he forgets nothing, the martyrdom he inflicted on our little dog Shiao Keu, his thefts of canned goods, his wish, every time we were near the land, to poke a hole through the boat or to drive her upon the rocks . . . and during the last few days, his evil thoughts. Silence him? I try to do so, but he shouts too loudly in his distress . . . besides, there is that light which shines in his eyes, which brings rest to his features as he speaks.

Then comes the relaxation! By dint of being hungry, we cease being hungry . . . and on the 21st of October . . . my birthday! that last half-cracker which my mate had concealed from me as a surprise, and which we eat . . . what a treat! Each day Tati feels more and more that he is going to die, and slowly, with closed eyes, he tells the beads of his rediscovered rosary; and that sensation so sweet, so infinitely sweet, which makes me see Death exactly for what it is: something sweet, infinitely sweet,

which is called Life! On the 22nd of October, the next day, sighting at night that Japanese steamer, with all its lights, passing 100 yards from us! Saved? No! . . . too weak to hoist a light . . . too weak to call out our distress . . . and the steamer leaving as she passed a smell of cooking, and fading away into the night. Then the coast of Molokai on the horizon! Two days becalmed . . . and dying; . . . Tati compelling me to reach the anchorage of Kalaupapa.

How can I do it? I do not know! I see myself at the tiller. Who gives me the strength to steer? I want to save the *Fou Po*. After that, let the will of God. . .

It is raining; a cold rain; the swell invades the roadstead; there are breakers to the left under the lighthouse. I call to Tati:

"Let go the anchor!"

And I hear the chain running out; it stops, and the voice of Tati, from the bows:

"We've been brought up by the anchor, captain!"

After that nothing more: a great void. Later I find myself in the cabin, Tati has dragged me there. He is shouting towards the land for help. I see dim lights dancing on the deck: it is a ship's lantern he is waving. Will anyone reply? Later still three brown-skinned men arrive, magnificent, Hawaiians. "There is a French missionary ashore," they say. "Leave it to us; we will take you away." No! Take this message: a few lines in pencil: "We are starving! Some bread, send us a piece of bread!" Will the missionary be able to read them? Then the natives return with that American whom I recognized just now. He is the director of the leper settlement. He drags us away from our ship without any explanation. And now, this bright hospital room, the fair-haired nurse smiling, the tall American doctor, long and thin, the Chinese doctor, pink and

fresh-looking, Tati in the next room, and the *Fou Po* swaying in the roadstead.

It is true: everything is O.K.!

\* \* \*

Is it possible, my God! Is it possible that You should be playing that game? What men call Your Providence, I have never doubted. . . . You know it well! You gave me the strength to bear without complaining all the ordeals You sent me; You made me die of starvation, sail for long days in the companionship of Death, You made me glimpse salvation only to prolong my agony . . . remember . . . that steamer? Do You remember the roadsteads of Kalaupapa? You were within Your rights, but why not let me die when You had engineered everything to that end? I was, You knew it, ready; and You aroused in me a hope of life only the better to strike me down to-day. Is it You whom men call merciful?

You merciful? What man would be cruel enough to toy thus with the fate of another man, cruel enough, crafty enough? A cat does not play so long with a mouse it means to slaughter.

\* \* \*

I felt it during the night; something was happening: I could not close my eyes. I remember very well that gust of wind which, for a few minutes, rattled the window of my room; I thought at once of my *Fou Po* in the roadstead; we had anchored her there yesterday, but badly perhaps? I remember I had asked for a second anchor to be put out; have they done it? Yes, surely.

Yet while that squall was blowing I felt uneasy within myself. Something was hurting my heart. My *Fou Po*? No, it isn't possible. A God Whom men call merciful, would not stoop to such jests.

And yet! . . .

Just now, on waking, I see the nurse near me.

She helps me to get up; takes me, leaning on her arm, into the hall, and makes me sit down; how different she looks from yesterday: her features are tired, she seems weary: she wants to speak, but can only utter words devoid of sense.

Besides, everything seems strange to me: I caught sight of the tall doctor at the far end of the hall; I wished to smile to him, but he turned his head away as if to avoid my eyes and he disappeared into a room. Tati was to come and see me this morning . . . he does not show up! Where is he?

The nurse is standing before me; why is she looking at me thus, with unblinking eyes?

She speaks, and what she says is so queer:

"Just suppose," says she gently, "just suppose that after having suffered . . . you were to hear . . . you were to hear bad news?"

What does she mean? I don't understand!

"Suppose that . . . after having suffered . . . but having escaped death, being saved, in a word! That is the main thing after all, is it not?"

She is talking nonsense! No doubt she's had a bad night.

I see Tatibouet coming, slowly, pale; how pale he is! Why does he too look at me with staring eyes?

Suddenly, I understand: that gust last night? The one that rushed into the room. The *Fou Po*.

With a lump in my throat, I ask questions, not daring to believe the worst.

"What? Tell me? The boat?"

Tatibouet flings himself into my arms.

"Yes, my poor Captain, our boat! Lost! Last night



—cast upon the beach, she was found this morning, on the rocks, stove in!"

I have a swift vision of the disaster. My eyes grow dim. I get up like a machine, I want to run to see *her* for the last time, but everything spins around me, and I fall to the ground, collapsed, like a rag!

\* \* \*

They have carried me back to my bed. Alone the nurse remains by my side: she relates to me, slowly, the extent of the disaster.

Some natives, at break of day, noticed the junk driven upon the rocks, her hull stove in. She bumped all night; the bottom of the hull was crushed, the sea rushed in, swamping everything, carrying off everything. In a few hours three years of effort, of struggle, wasted! My manuscripts, my notes, my drawings, my photos, my notebooks of computations, everything swallowed by the sea!

And I weep, I weep like a kid who has been beaten. And You are that God Whom men call merciful?

\* \* \*

The door of the room opens gradually. May one come in? I turn my head: who can be speaking French here? In the half-opening, I see the face of an old man with a grey beard, who is smiling.

The French missionary! A priest of that merciful God, of that sect styled Catholic. What does he want with me? His visit is unseasonable!

"What do you want?" I ask in a gruff tone.

He enters with a broader smile, closes the door, and standing before my bed:

"I have come merely to tell you this: Dear Captain, never despair. The ways of God are unfathomable!"

I feel that I am going to insult him. Has he come to

make fun of me? Is he entrusted by his God to prolong the sinister comedy for a while?

But I stop . . . a kind of light, illuminating the face of the priest, strikes me.

In a lower tone, he continues:

"Yes, I have come merely to tell you this: Do not despair. The ways of God are unfathomable!"

And he adds:

"Yes, I know! I know! You have lost everything, or at any rate you think you have lost everything! The future is dark? You are weeping? You are cast down? You are cursing Heaven? And yet you are less to be pitied, much less, than those hundreds of unfortunates in whose midst I live . . . those lepers. Do you know what a leper is? Corroded in body, corroded in soul, shunned, despised of all . . . and yet, listen, *they* are not weeping!"

A distant sound is rising, clear, half-religious, half-joyful . . . the same that I heard yesterday.

"*They* are singing!"

There seems to be more light yet around the old man's head; I lower my brow.

"And why are your lepers singing?"

"I am going to tell you, child!"

And whilst I am smiling at that name given to my grizzled hair, the Father sits at my bedside.

"Because some years ago, a humble priest from Flanders. . . ."

"Father Damien?"

"Yes, Father Damien came here, died here, a leper among his lepers. If you knew how he suffered! Less of the disease that was eating him up than of the jealousy of his brothers in Jesus Christ. But he never ceased being joyful. One is always joyful, is not one, when one knows that one is allaying the pains of others? He is

dead; people believe that he is dead. But no! His soul is still living here among the lepers, his merry soul. That is why my lepers are singing to-day.

"They are gay. Look, if you could stand on your legs, you would come with me; you would see that great America has done a great deal for them: they have their cinemas, their motor-cars, their dance halls. All that is very well, but I should also take you to Mass. You would remain in the back row, so as only to see their backs . . . (full-face, believe me, it is horrible. When I said my first Mass, I turned round towards them for the *Orate fratres* . . . I tell you, full-face, it is horrible!) and you would hear them sing, and you would be deeply moved. Why? Because it is the soul of Father Damien that is singing within them."

I lower my head, ashamed of myself.

I hear, as in a dream, the door closing; as in a dream also, the voice that continues:

"Yes, never despair!"

The room is empty. Suddenly it appears brighter, more joyful. Could it be the soul of Father Damien?

\* \* \*

The Father gone, Tatibouet comes in.

"Tati," I say to him, "I do not know yet how I am going to manage it, but I am going to sail away!"

He looks at me, surprised.

"I am going to sail away. I am going to build a new boat."

Tati, seizing my hands, says to me:

"I shall go off with you, Captain; you know, I can't leave you . . . I know: you are ruined . . . it is partly my fault. I waited until you were at the end of your tether. I hoped that this adventure would come to an end when you came to your last penny; but to-day,

I am telling you, it's my turn now, I have still a good bit of money in China. You want to build a new boat? We shall build a new boat! Well, shall we return to China to build a new junk?"

What is happening now in my mind, I cannot say exactly.

"No, my good Tati, not a junk this time; we are going to build—a Polynesian double canoe."

He looks at me, flabbergasted.

"What sort of boat is that?"

"I don't know quite, yet, but it is a type of sailing-ship which Polynesians used in former days to cross the Pacific; oh, I suppose a thousand years ago or so."

## Chapter II

### AT HONOLULU

28th October, Pacific Club

THE news of the wreck created a stir in the Hawaiian Archipelago: the American newspapers had an opportunity of displaying sensational headings! They cannot understand why that Chinese junk, which has been so much talked of in the Pacific, should have been abandoned in the roadstead of Kalaupapa, which has such a bad reputation, with her moribund crew in the hospital! Would it not have sufficed to wireless (for all the islands in the Archipelago are connected by wireless) to Oahu, when the *Coastguard* could have come at once and towed her away into the shelter a few miles away, into the magnificent harbour of Honolulu?

But why complain? The *Fou Po* is lost: she was destined to be lost! The French missionary from the leper settlement, Father d'Orgeval, said it repeatedly: "The ways of God are unfathomable. Let us never despair!"

Be it so!

*Fiat voluntas tua, sicut in cælo . . . et in mare!*

\* \* \*

A 'plane, called in by the director of the settlement, is to come this afternoon, to land near the lighthouse and take us away to Honolulu. The nurses have woven *leis*—wreaths—of flowers, and have placed them over our lean shoulders; Father d'Orgeval, the Catholic sisters, the staff of the hospital, see us off. Some lepers arrive in a car: they too want to bid us good-bye; I catch sight

of one of them, with his face horribly corroded, who smiled at us with a horrible grin. Near him is an elegant woman, bright and fresh-looking, his wife. It is only a few months ago, I am told, that she came to join her husband. She was not a leper then, she is not one yet. . . . She too is smiling. What a pretty smile! I think of that other sentence of the French missionary: "One's heart is so joyful when one sacrifices oneself for the sake of others!"

We take off: below us are the breakers; the coast of Kalaupapa streams away; I recognize the pier where we were got ashore, then, upon the rocks, a little fleck, a small white mark: the *Fou Po* . . . what remains of her! Her gear is still there; the mainmast seems to be hanging over the bows. I feel a pang in my heart; I avert my eyes.

We are now flying above gigantic cliffs, sheer; waterfalls cut them vertically like long silver strips; we fly over plateaus, symmetrically outlined with immense fields of pineapple; we pass through the strait, we make for a line of uneven peaks on the southern slope of Oahu; I catch sight of country houses lost in the greenery, large hotels, a beach on which the surf is breaking, the bright specks which are the bathers, a big harbour . . . we land!

\* \* \*

Our Consular Agent, who has been notified, must be there. What a large number of people there are in the airport! But why are all those people running, surrounding the 'plane? I recognize them. They are reporters, cameramen! Are they going to fight among themselves? No! Suddenly they stand motionless. Why? Ah! I know, because they have just caught sight of our ugly skeleton faces, which appear at the door of

the cabin. I well understand their surprise: big Tati's body draped in clothes too tight for him, which show where his bones are; and mine floating in toggerly much too vast. Comical! And both of us with our garlands of flowers around our necks! Flowers are generally gay, but not those that accompany the dead!

Their professional duties soon regain the upper hand: the reporters, speechless for a while, bestir themselves anew: the hope to be the first to hear details concerning a 'beautiful experience'! The cameramen, anxious to fix our ugly faces upon their films. What a windfall . . . just think of it! A junk wrecked, there, quite close, at their very door, two Frenchmen . . . the tortures of hunger!

Our Consul comes forward: Mr. Irving Pecker. He is an American, but very French in manner . . . the best manner!

"I have booked you a bungalow at the Pacific Club; you will be very comfortable there, the smartest Club in Honolulu. I live there! We will talk about all that presently, when I take you there. For the time being I leave you with the Press." He steps aside; the reporters surround us, press us more closely. I lean on Tati's arm. How I would love to send all these people to the devil! Questions are rained upon us. Some of them leave me speechless: American journalists are so inquisitive! Then questions become more precise.

"What are your plans now?"

"But . . . but . . ." I reply candidly, "I will build another boat . . . and go to sea again!"

I have a confused impression that I have just said something silly! The reporters look at one another, dumb-founded. Then they stare at me; all these men, standing firm on their feet, pink and shining with health, stare

at the ridiculous puppet that I am, a skeleton about to collapse, staring at them with dulled eyes, who is talking of building another boat, going back to sea again . . . comical! Sad, maybe?

They want to know more.

I speak, but I forget now what I said. Something about a double Polynesian canoe . . . two boats coupled together; a platform between the two? Yes! . . . a good boat? Well, it is mentioned in legend.

"But the design?"

"I will make it myself."

"Have you got any experience of that kind of ship-building?"

"No. I can't have, nobody has, you understand . . . it is 500 years at least, since . . ."

Some of the reporters stare at one another, with an amused gleam in their eyes; others stare at me, seriously and somewhat anxiously.

"Poor devil, he must be wandering," they think.

The Consul comes forward. The Press steps aside.

"Come," says he. "Come and rest."

\* \* \*

To enable us to purchase toilet requisites on arriving at the hospital, the American hospital staff had collected 65 dollars; they handed this to us discreetly, in an envelope, when we took off in the 'plane. Tati goes out to make some purchases.

The Consul summons the Club chef, a Frenchman:

"You will have to look after them," he says, "not too much though, at first!" We are recovering our vitality. The restaurant waiters bring us fruit on the sly. Tati puts in an occasional secret visit to the kitchens, in quest of leavings. He often returns furious:



"If you knew," says he, "the waste that is going on there: dozens of steaks brought back from the tables, not touched, and all chucked into a dustbin. If we had had a dustbin like that on the *Fou Po*, eh?"

We recover quickly, strangely quickly . . . after all, we were not really sick; starving, that is all. My legs are still flabby, but my morale is as good as ever; I have received two letters which have something to do with this: one from the *National Geographic Magazine*, of Washington, sent off before the wreck, asking me to write a few articles about the islands we visited. A wealthy review, that *National Geographic*! The other from our own Geographical Society in Paris: M. Grandidier, its General Secretary, tells me that for a year and a half, a letter has been chasing me into the most diverse corners of the Pacific without ever reaching me: it informs me that the Charles Garnier Prize has been awarded me for my studies of the equatorial counter-current, from the east of the Philippines to the south of the Carolines, that it carries with it a few thousand-franc notes. I immediately cable to Paris: "Thank you! Thank you! Send it along!"

On his part Tati cables to China, to go through the formalities of raising a loan on his "shares"; we also receive a touching letter from the lepers of Molokai; those poor devils have clubbed together and are sending us 150 dollars!

The newspapers continue to display their sympathy towards us, pompously calling us "scientists"; our pluck in wishing to start off again and face death in the interest of Science is their favourite theme. Every one of our actions is interpreted, the least anecdote is related, and some of them are amusing!

A fortnight before the arrival at Molokai, in a corner of the *Fou Po*, I had discovered a rusty old tin, at the

bottom of which some stinking tallow was turning rancid, a tin which the American Navy, three years previously, had presented to us at Cavite to grease our masts with. At that time, all that remained to us in the way of food was a half-bottle of curry powder! A spoonful of that tallow, mixed with a little sea-water, a pinch of curry, when boiled together, made up a soup . . . pleasant in appearance . . . there were even specks of fat on it, as on the best of *bouillons*, but when it came to eating it! Ye Gods, enough to make you vomit! The American newspapers, in order the better to strike the imagination of their readers, had turned that tallow into candle.

One day when we were dining with our Consul, in the crowded room of the Club, the head waiter comes to us, in great pomp, preceding two boys bearing an immense silver tray with a dish-cover.

"Those gentlemen over there," he informs us (they were the director of the Bishop Museum and a group of friends), "have been kind enough to have this prepared especially for you!"

He raises the dish-cover, and we see, a marvel of decorative art, lettuce hearts deposited in the middle of glistening tomato sauce, surrounded by pickles and catsup, whilst in the middle of the silver dish are stretched out—but what is it exactly? Our noses come forward a little—and we recognize two enormous candles, sliced lengthways!

Suddenly remembering the tallow *bouillon* of the *Fou Po*, I just manage to suppress my nausea, whilst a loud burst of laughter shakes the restaurant.

The next day, the newspapers related the incident with enthusiasm:

"Long live French appetite!"

What seemed to surprise them most, was that the

Frenchmen who were the objects of that practical joke, could take it, as the Yanks would have it!

\* \* \*

We have been living for a month at the Pacific Club; then we leave our bungalow, its garden, its palms, the good French cooking of the Club in order to set up house in more economical fashion! The Pan Pacific Union offers us lodging free of charge. That Society, with its noble aspirations, has for its object the creation among the peoples of the Pacific, to whatever race they may belong, of sympathy and reciprocal understanding (*surely it will have some trouble with the Japanese*). It has reserved for us two rooms in a vast building, overlooking Manoa Valley; a kitchen, too. We share the latter with a few other scientists, similarly housed by the charitable "Union"; we share? Hardly at all, for those honourable scientists, deep in their researches, often neglect to prepare their meals there; they are higher minded than we are.

I then set to work.

Oh! It does not take long to declare that one is about to build a double Polynesian canoe! But you have got to know a lot of things for that! Moreover, it is a queer notion! I have a general impression, I may say an intuitive impression, of what such a boat can do at sea. But what about the details, and the details are so important sometimes? After all, I thought, in order to cheer myself along, one fact is certain, and that is, the Polynesians of ancient times used to cross the oceans in double canoes. What then?

I begin to sneak about, to prow! about the libraries of the town, to study the archives and collections of the famous Bishop Museum—nothing reliable, nothing at all, or very little!

I find out, here and there, bits of information concerning double canoes, but only concerning those which the natives are still using in some of the remoter islands, boats no longer having any of the characteristics of sea-going vessels. They are only types of coastal craft, for display or fighting purposes, the mode of propulsion being mainly the paddle; some of them were able, if need be, to receive some help from a bit of canvas, but I cannot consider them as deep-sea sailers: their construction and assembly, satisfactory for navigating within sight of land with the help of paddles, provide no information at all concerning the construction of a boat similar to the boats used in Polynesian exploration and migration.

In a word, the great art has disappeared!

\* \* \*

Am I going to let myself be cast down? Sometimes I think I am! I am learning so very little. All that I have discovered is this: the double canoes of legend were composed of two hulls, of a length attaining sometimes 25 metres; these hulls were coupled together at intervals of from one to one and a half metres by transverse beams; those beams supported a platform, and that platform was at the same time the centre of life on board and the support for the masts.

What were the characteristics of the hulls? How were they put together? How seaworthy were they? How was the canvas "trimmed"?

To be sure, I find in the Bishop Museum a number of models described as "ancient," Polynesian craft with outrigger or else coupled, but the eye of the least experienced seafaring man could not be deceived by them: these picturesque models have only been imagined and manufactured to please the inquisitive tourist; they are only charming "souvenirs" from the islands! They

look well enough in glass cases in the museum, but are of no use to me: these pretty models are for the most part so strangely "trimmed" in their canvas, so queerly shaped as regards their hulls, that the real craft which they are supposed to reproduce not only could never sail, but, inferior in every way to the meanest old tub, could not decently ride the waters!

Moreover, shortly after my visit, I hear that the Director of the Bishop Museum, finding it impossible to bestow upon his "models" any certain authenticity, has relegated them to the attic: some of the show-cases will lose thereby their picturesqueness no doubt, but they will gain in scientific accuracy.

Nor can I attach any importance to all those descriptions, received by word of mouth from natives whom I have questioned over and over again, God knows how, through the medium of scientific inquirers. More in order to make them say what one would like them to say than to learn what they might possibly know! Moreover, the information, inevitably incomplete and incorrect, seemed to me to have been completed and further distorted by those scientists who were ignorant of the things of the sea, in order to make their reports look well. To speak of boats, and above all of sailing boats, still more of their construction, of their navigation, of life at sea in them, is it not absolutely necessary to have a minimum of sea sense? And sea sense is such a very rare thing; it is very rarely to be found even among seafaring men, at any rate among those whom it is customary to call seafaring men. For the layman, a seafaring man is one whose profession is to live on the sea. A mistake! a big mistake. A seafaring man is one whom his tastes force to live "with" the sea. That, no doubt, is why, nowadays, the number of seafaring men is in inverse ratio to the size of the ships.

In short, where could I find technical details concerning the future double canoe? Legends, archives, museums, nothing! But, when I come to think of it, there still existed semblances of double canoes at the time of the discovery of the Pacific? Let us look up the narratives of Cook, of Bougainville, of d'Entrecasteaux.

I have often noticed, when arguing with scientists, who had specialized in Polynesian problems, an affectation of distrust, a somewhat contemptuous pose regarding the ethnological observations which had been made by the early navigators and explorers of the Pacific. Just think of it! How could one believe those people? They had never received the slightest special training; they had not been taught to think and to deduce facts through the minds of others; they were still at the stage of having a personality of their own. . . .

With all due deference to those specialized scientists and admitting even that men such as Cook, or the officers of his staff, did not possess the observant mind, the culture, the breadth of view possessed by the gentlemen in the museums, and admitting that it is necessary to consider their observations and their remarks concerning general ethnology as being without value (which is far from being the case), there is one point, I think, upon which they will be less nonsensical than the others . . . that is, when they speak of ships or of the sea!

Being fairly logical, I am therefore of the opinion that I am likely to find more light in the accounts of the travels of the early navigators than in any fancy scale model and any legendary story. Doubtless I shall also find in them a few sketches, drawn from life, by the artists who frequently accompanied the expeditions. I again search the libraries. I find there admirable old editions; I feverishly investigate—and I find nothing.

Oh, yes, a few distant silhouettes of tiny sailing double canoes in an original edition of a book on Captain Cook's voyages.

\* \* \*

Never mind, I set to work on my designs! What have I to enable me to solve my problems? A few generalities and some vague engravings!

## Chapter III

### THE BIRTH OF THE KAIMILOA

THE problems to be solved are numerous. The linking of the boats is one of the most delicate: let us suppose that the two hulls are built, how are they to be joined together? What must be their relation to the platform? A rigid "whole"? I do not think so, in spite of the advice of numerous nautical experts; in my opinion, hulls and platform should make one unit, complete in itself no doubt, but if that unit is to have sufficient resistance to withstand the various thrusts of the sea, it must also have enough suppleness to withstand them harmoniously: it shall not be rigid!

Did not the Polynesians of old (like those of to-day when fixing out-riggers to their canoes), solve the problem with lashings of fibres and lianas? Did not the latter, when suitably corded together, provide the desired elasticity?

It is evident that I can obtain the same result with certain modern types of rope, but it would hardly be practical: the navigators of old were numerous on their double canoes: they could keep a look-out at all times, and the readjustment of lashings must have been frequent.

I then make up my mind to use chains instead of ropes, and, in order to maintain the principle of suppleness, to add to these a system of springs working by compression: under the platform, which is to be rigid, there will be slight "play" for the two hulls.

I call upon the engineer of a great iron-works and ask



him to be kind enough to study my scheme; he tells me how pleased he is to collaborate in solving one of the problems of the future double canoe, and a few weeks later, as a result of his calculations on resistance, which are certainly very complicated, he presents me with the result of his work, and of that of his workshops!

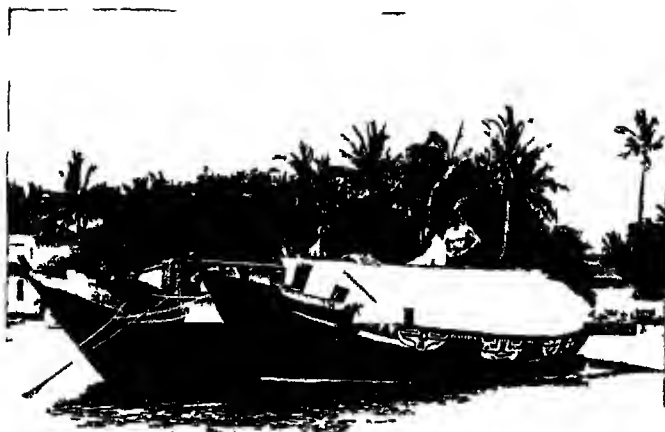
I am somewhat surprised at the result: it is quite different from the idea which I had formed: the size of the iron used for the springs is so very large that I am tempted to ask him if by any chance he had imagined that I meant to couple together the *Queen Mary* and the *Normandie*?

As politely as possible, I leave with him the gadget resulting from his mathematical calculations, and I decide to trust to my own instinct.

I prowls about amongst all the dealers in old iron but I find nothing, and secretly I am pleased, for all dealers in old iron in Honolulu (as in many other places in this world) are Japanese (everybody knows that the Japanese are in need of iron, will be in need of a great deal of it soon). Any springs bought in their shops would have been sure to play us a dirty trick; those people bring me bad luck!

Finally, I unearth, in an old electric tramcar cemetery, a heap of rusty parts, and among them a dozen springs in fairly good condition. I draw, without a model, a plan for making them compressible; I relate my little story to a blacksmith, half Chinaman, half Hawaiian, said to be very skilful . . . and that man, who is not a civil engineer, but who is intelligent, understands even before knowing what I am after (the cross-breeding of Chinese and Hawaiians is known to give the finest of human products, physically and intellectually); he understands and carries out the work to perfection.

Second problem: what shape am I to give the hulls?



THE TWO HULLS OF THE "KAIMILOA" ARE UNITED CAPTAIN DE  
BISSCHOP AND PAPALEAIANA ALONE BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL  
REMAIN SO

CAPTAIN DE BISSCHOP TESTS HIS SYSTEM OF 'SPRING' CONNECTIONS



THE " KAIMILOA " FIRST POINTS HER STERN TO THE OCEAN

THE BOTTOM IS DIVIDED INTO WATERTIGHT COMPARTMENTS ON THE  
CHINESE METHOD

As a result of the space between, each will be called upon to sustain, especially with broadside seas, vertical and horizontal thrusts of very different natures; instinctively I realize why Polynesian sailing craft of old, like those of many islands of to-day, are shaped like half-moons with lines obviously as fine as possible on account of leeway, but with their submerged lines increasing the displacement, slowly, very slowly; one hull, immersed in the water, sustains a vertical upward thrust, the other sewing, a downward one; in a word, they behave, under the action of the sea, as a double spring, extensible and compressible, would behave. Where for these hulls will be what the theory of ship-building calls the water-line? I do not know. There again, I trust to my instinct. I draw my curves, I imagine that they have been properly followed and modify them by eye. Nothing mathematical about that. But when I see that the lines of a boat are not what they ought to be for the part which they will have to play when at sea, it makes me squint and gives me the stomach-ache!

I also calculate different methods of attachment for the spring chains that are to fasten the platform to the two hulls, so that the shock of the seas may be withstood progressively and harmoniously by the chains taking the strain in succession (and consequently the springs that are attached thereto). One must not treat Nature roughly: for Nature will always be the stronger; as she is not cruel, but sometimes rough herself, it is sufficient to know that she can on such occasions be resisted by yielding. She always takes her revenge, sooner or later, on those who, in their conceit, imagine that they have mastered her for all time.

Third problem: how am I to fix the masts in the centre of the platform?

An ordinary sailing-ship, struck by a strong wind, heels over: the angle of thrust of the wind on the canvas decreases therefore generally with the angle of listing, a thing which allows of comparative lightness in the selection of the woods and of the shrouds to be used. But on a double canoe which will not list, or hardly at all, everything has to hold firm; if anything has to give way, let it be for instance a length of sheet, which will cause but minor damage; consequently the mast will have to be very strong and firmly stepped.

Fourth problem: the most important, for it alone may make the boat (and consequently the voyage) possible or impossible, with such a reduced crew as ours—the rudder.

It is absolutely necessary that the double canoe should be able to steer itself. The tiller must, like that of the lamented *Fou Po*, remain lashed for days, weeks, months; it is necessary that on every course, close-hauled, with beam wind, with wind on the quarter, and even dead aft, the double canoe should sail straight, without our having to fear any dangerous yawing, that it should possess perfect stability when under weigh, in every kind of sea.

Already I can see some yachtsmen smile. They say: "What a Utopian idea!"

You may remember the excited controversies, in all the Yacht Clubs of the world, when there appeared Captain Slocum's book, the first to sail alone, without auxiliary motor! Did not that fellow Slocum state that his little ship, the *Spray*, sailed herself, that he remained for months without even casting a glance at the tiller? What a liar! people said it was impossible!

Nevertheless many tackled the problem of the automatic rudder; they evolved complicated systems, with sails, pulleys and strings, acting on the tiller as soon as the

boat started yawing. Very pretty on paper and in fair weather! Such a gadget might possibly have worked under regular conditions of wind and sea, but I am very much afraid that when these conditions came to alter (and the sea, like woman, enjoys those sudden shifts of mood), the sails, pulleys and strings would, in a squall, become a cause of further damage. I even consider that this would be the best method of placing the boat, automatically, in a critical situation.

Now, it is above all in a heavy sea, in a strong wind, when the rain and spray are beating down, that one appreciates "a good longitude" in one's berth, and would love to see one's boat sufficiently intelligent to carry on alone.

Captain Slocum belongs to that category of human beings of whom there are but few specimens.

He is simple and true; and his life, in harmony with his character, is simple and true. He set out to roll down the seas in his *Spray* doubtless for two reasons: because he loved to live at sea, and because he loved to commune with himself. Could he, therefore, having followed the life of his choice, offer to the admiration of the crowds he had shunned, an account of a voyage that was not simple and true?

He might have, after sailing across the oceans, as he informs us, mostly lying in his bunk, reading a good book or else dreaming, he might have described imaginary sufferings, his endurance, the long hours of boredom spent at the tiller, or his wrestling with the wild sea swamping his frail craft . . . and more besides.

He did not do so. He certainly never thought of doing so, for he is too much of a sailor to lie to himself, still less to the public.

His extraordinary circumnavigation was free from great adventures, it is he who says so. His boat remained

for months and months at sea . . . it is he who says so.

And everybody exclaims: "What a humbug! What stories he is telling us!" and his exploit was not greeted as it deserved to be. That is inevitable, is it not?

For, if the world sometimes greets a feat with enthusiasm, it insists upon having good grounds for doing so, something in exchange! That a poor devil has suffered: excellent! That he has left his bones there: admirable! One hastens to make a hero of him, for a time at any rate. Slocum accomplished his exploit quietly, and without fuss . . . it is he who says so: so people do not believe him. What a fraud!

For those who are somewhat ignorant of life at sea, here is the truth: Slocum, journeying from east to west, generally with leading winds, demonstrates that the accomplishment of his exploit upon a boat capable of keeping on its course, with a rudder that needs no attention, is almost child's play—almost, I hasten to say, in case you are the type of man that inclines to that sort of child's play.

All these years I wanted to make the *Fou Po* sail up the wind and currents of the Pacific . . . from west to east! Idiot? not a bit of it. For I was not keen on mere long-distance sailing, and I advise no one to undertake such navigation for pleasure: my purpose was different: I wanted to study certain little-known currents and to fathom some of the mysteries of the Pacific. Every one to his taste, is that not so?

My mate and I struggled for three years to go from China to the Hawaiian Islands; we covered more ground on the way than would have sufficed to go twice round the world: Torres Strait to Honolulu took us fifteen months, and during those fifteen months, what adventures! To mention one or two only, the cannibals of

Papua, so civilized in their intercourse with us; the Japanese of the Marshall Islands, so uncouth; and to cap all: a wreck. In between times, many others!

Well, that same trip, taken in the opposite direction, the *Fou Po* could have covered in two months: two short months of easy sailing, lying in our bunks, with the tiller lashed.

Yes, I want the new double canoe to steer herself. Nevertheless, we shall not return towards Torres Strait with favourable currents and winds; no, there is still yonder, towards the south-east, a little corner of the sea that intrigues me, and attracts me . . . and the double canoe shall steer herself there unaided!

"And what about the sails? What type of sail do you intend to use on that boat?" People often ask me that.

I reply: "Chinese sails!"

And folks laugh! But I shall use Chinese sails all the same, or rather, the so-called Chinese sails, for nowadays whoever sees canvas stretched on bamboos associates it with the junk; people forget (or else do not know) that the use of bamboos in sails made of canvas or of matting has at all times been known by the peoples of the Pacific, and that at a time when the Chinese were still ignorant of seafaring and of sailing-boats.

Why that particular type of sail? For many reasons, of which I shall mention only a few:

First, its extreme ease of handling. What is, at sea, the operation which is at the same time the most delicate and the most bothersome? Reefing down, is it not? The squall strikes you, you must lower sail in all haste; often the canvas will not come down; you must bring the boat into the wind. The sail flaps, sometimes tears, the main boom swings about and nearly knocks you



into the "briny"; an ordinary sail, of the same area as the *Fou Po*'s, needs two experienced men to wrestle with it, plus another man at the tiller; and the operation takes, if all goes well, from five to ten minutes before everything is secured. With our bamboo-stretched sails, how long will it take? One man and one minute. . . . "Pay out the halliard, me lad!" The sail folds up on itself like an accordeon, takes as many reefs as you like, automatically. One turn, make fast; one little pull to take in the slack of the sheet, and . . . finished, all over so far as the operation is concerned: all clear! On the *Fou Po*, the rudder, in spite of the shortening of sails, did not even need to be touched: the boat kept on her course: (rather convenient, is it not?).

Second: it is not necessary to have spare sails! That is understandable too! Is there a hole in the sail, a rent? Bah! That is of no importance! We will repair that later, when the weather is fine, or when we put in somewhere; for the hole and the rent will not spread any further, will go no further than a small lozenge enclosed in a system of bolt-ropes, sewn upon the canvas diagonally. Our sails on the *Fou Po*, made of very light cotton, stood three years without being unbent. . . . Holes, ah! yes, often, very often the canvas, burnt by the sun, was nothing but holes, all that still held were the boltrope stays, we sailed somehow! Recollect those silhouettes of junks on the Yangtse; their sails are nothing more than bits of sunburned rags flowing in the wind, but the mesh of bolt-holes stretched over the bamboos, intact, keeps the whole thing in shape. You can admire the landscape through them . . . and you sail along all the same!

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*Honolulu, "Queen's Hospital."**January 1936*

Here I am back again in the hospital. I have been here a fortnight. The building of the ship has been held up; we had discovered, between Waikiki and the little harbour of Ala Moana, a charming little beach in the shade of the Algarobas. We have been authorized to do our ship-building there; and by the roadside, facing the sea, stand our "apartments"—a cast-off American army tent bought for 10 dollars; the canvas is a bit worn, and when one of those heavy tropical showers occurs, the woof, slackened by the sun, caught unawares, has not time to tighten up, and the water drips into the bunks. That is where the doctor, called in a fortnight ago by an excited Tati, found me writhing in agony. I knew what it was; the doctor at Port Moresby had told me two years ago—appendicitis; they carry me off instantly and operate on me a few hours later. I knew that the operation would have to be done some time or other, but at Honolulu, it worried me, on account of the gold dollar. The Consul informed me that in my case the hospital would be free; had not a Frenchman, straying in the Islands some twenty years ago, bequeathed in dying a nice little sum to the hospital in order that there might always be two free beds, reserved for sick Frenchmen who might be in need? Noble Son of France!

I tell the good news to Tati. . . . Now is your chance: there is a free bed for you, have yourself operated on *gratis*! He prefers to keep his appendix! Yet he would be much more comfortable here with all these pretty little American, Korean, Japanese and Hawaiian nurses, than in eating out his heart all alone in the tent.

*March 1936*

We are at work again.

The tent and the "shipyard" have become one of the sights of the town and the Islands.

The two keels are laid out on the sand: no one understands: that start in shipbuilding upsets all the ideas of the specialists. Yet I have an impression that it is not so very idiotic; to preserve the mode of construction of the Polynesians, who, in their sea-going craft, started from the initial principle of the dugout (the hollowed-out trunk of a tree), adding to it, in order to increase the freeboard, as many big planks as were necessary, skilfully fitted to the correct shape. I have discarded the usual keel; in its stead, a thick beam carved to shape on the top of which we have nailed the planking of the hull.

No one has ever built the bottom of a boat like that? Very likely not! But it is quicker, and to me it seems stronger.

In order to help us saw up the big pieces of timber, we need a workman, but only the Japanese of Honolulu go in for the construction and repairing of ships. I'd rather die! They would cast a spell on the planking.

A Chinaman turns up: he knows how to handle the saw and the plane, he is a bungalow carpenter, a specialist in roofing; he has never driven a nail into a boat. Never mind, he will drive them where we tell him to; so we engage him.

The Hawaiian population of our neighbourhood is taking a great interest in the work. The newspapers have given us big headlines, have written at length about the researches which I am carrying out concerning the migrations of the Polynesians and their ancient methods of navigation; every day we are visited by an old man. He sits down on a chunk of wood, watches us, and only interrupts his contemplation to call in any native who may happen to be passing within hail:

"Come along," he shouts, "just come and look! This is the place where these two Frenchmen are going to re-make our history."

And everybody draws near, looks, smiles, and goes off without saying a word.

The American population, by nature sympathetic with any scheme daring in appearance, can, in the majority of cases, only consider that ship-building as strange, and our intention of crossing the oceans in a double canoe as absolutely mad. Our present designation is the "two audacious but crazy Frenchmen."

\* \* \*

The Press, which our adventure excites more and more, publishes article after article, photo after photo, indicating the slightest progress in the construction.

Motor-cars slow down opposite the shipyard. Some stop—absent-mindedly, and the little shop of Kam Luk, the Chinaman opposite, is witness of many a collision, many a telescoping!

Prying folk come in crowds into the shipyard: the more the boats, which are regarded as freaks, take shape, the more advice rains upon us. Each will have his say, fire his little observations, give his enlightened advice! Many, in order to vary the pleasure, ask us the most preposterous questions. In a word, the shipyard is always full; I am beginning to suspect the Tourist Bureau of having seized upon this novel and unexpected attraction to bribe the taxi drivers; at every arrival of mail boats, *Matson*, *President*, or *Empress*, the tent and the two hulls receive the inquisitive visit of passengers, male and female, freshly landed, with their shoulders still laden with the "leis" of flowers bestowed on them on arrival, and their hands pitilessly armed with Kodaks and movie cameras.

Making every effort to keep intact the fine reputation for politeness which our people possess abroad, I endeavour to give to the crowd of questioners and advisers the most perfect illustration of that difficult art. It gives me much trouble: I very soon discover what a rare virtue patience is and what tiring mastery over oneself one must have in order to smile continually at people whom you would dearly love to send to the devil.

One day, worn out, I write on the hull of one of the canoes the simple prayer:

"Please do not ask questions!"

The result is magical: questions stop dead. Alas! To make up for it, advice crowds in more than ever.

I complete the sentence, and add, on another corner of the boat:

"We need more paint than advice!"

The result is more and more magical, yet not so much as I could have wished! For if advice, like the questions, ceases suddenly, no one seems desirous of understanding thoroughly the spirit of the inscription . . . and the days pass without the appearance on our horizon of the smallest pot of paint!

\* \* \*

Often, when we are enjoying our siesta under the tent, the entrance flap let down so as to enable us to relax, as the Americans say, in peace, there come to us groups of visitors, prowling about the shipyard, bits of conversation, all marked with evident sympathy, but in which the habitual word "crazy" keeps coming in, like a leitmotif; all my life I have been accustomed to that sort of epithet, but not with such insistence. It is becoming an obsession.

Then, to the collection of warnings and notices which I have marked in clear letters on the rough



TATIBOUET LEARNT HOW TO USE THE BOW DRILL IN CHINA



THIS IS HOW PAPALEALAINA APPEARED ON THE BEACH WHEN THE " KAIMILOA " WAS TAKING SHAPE

wood of the hulls, I add, including Tati in the statement:

"We know we are crazy; so please don't try to prove it to us!"

\* \* \*

It takes us about nine months to give birth to the twins, more than a year before they are allowed to make their *début* in the world—which is fairly normal when you come to think of it!

Nine months, on first thoughts, would seem to be a period fairly consistent with the laws of childbearing. But, to tell the simple truth, we could have done better, I mean quicker! A few months, four or five, would have sufficed. But who would not excuse us, knowing the Hawaiian Islands and the charm of Honolulu?

And moreover, almost at the beginning of the construction, there occurred in my life an event of a disturbing nature: an adventure which was to unite me more, or rather definitely to perpetuate my union with the Pacific; to be quite candid, an adventure which was at the same time the most beautiful of idylls and the most disturbing realization of a dream.

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I would like to draw a veil over that adventure, but its moral importance in the success of the *Kaimiloa* is such that I must relate it here:

The boat was growing up.

Men who had come from Europe and America were smiling: this boat was so different from theirs, and what is different often appears so ridiculous! The brown men of the Hawaiian Islands, on the other hand, came and looked on without saying a word.

In front of that irony of the men of my race and of



the unenthusiastic surprise of the natives, I gradually felt infiltrating within me the poison of despair.

One day when, feeling less confident, I was about to pursue my task without great courage, I noticed with surprise, in the rosy light of morning, that someone had preceded me on the shipyard.

A horse was tethered to the trunk of an algaroba. I drew near.

Behind one of the hulls of the *Kaimiloa*, I then noticed a woman; she was standing motionless, as if lost in a deep reverie; in her dark hair shone a big red hibiscus flower.

On hearing my approach, she turned her head, and I saw, I am bound to say it, I saw only two large luminous eyes that shone as shine the stars in the pure skies of the tropics.

I advanced towards her, and, as I had done to the noble old man of Molokai, I asked her:

"Who are you?"

She smiled and replied softly:

"What does it matter to you?"

And she moved towards the algaroba to untether her horse.

I stopped her:

"Could you, I pray you, before leaving, tell me why you were looking at the two hulls of this boat so seriously, whereas everybody smiles at them?"

"I was thinking," she said, letting her beautiful eyes gaze ahead as if they were plunging into the future, "I was thinking that those two hulls, which are to be united one day, will start off to conquer the seas . . . and that, still united, they will conquer the seas."

"Who are you, to speak with such assurance?"

"My name would mean nothing to you, and will

doubtless sound in your ears like barbaric music! I am Papaleiaiaina, and from my ancestor Lonoikahaupu was descended Kamehameha, the Conqueror of the Islands. My mother and my grandmother are singing to this day, contrary to custom because they are women, the genealogies which the men, alas! no longer sing. I know through them the marvellous exploits of the double canoes of legend. Over a thousand years ago, my ancestors landed on these islands in a boat similar to yours; they came from far away in the south—it is said that they came from a great country, beautiful as the sky, which one day was swallowed up in the waves. Their god had spared them, and they started off in search of other lands, at random! They discovered these shores. But do you know why Heaven permitted them to discover these islands, lost in the vast ocean? The songs which my mother and my grandmother still sing tell us why: because they had hoisted their sail when bereft of their goods but rich in their faith. Hoist your sail, you too, trusting in the gods of the sea, rich in your faith, and you will get there!"

She was silent for a moment, and her eyes staring before her as if they were plunging still more deeply into the future, she went on:

"Go, go without fear upon that boat of legend, upon that boat of my fathers, at which people here smile! Go in faith, and you will cross the seas, all the seas, and you will arrive, since such is to-day the goal of your journey, at the distant shores of your land of France."

And in a lower voice, she added:

"Perhaps also some day you will leave your distant country to return to our islands . . . in pursuit of your dream."

"In pursuit of my dream? What do you mean, how do you know?"

"How do I know? What matters it to you! Know only that that dream which sings within you, sings also, sings still within the soul of many of our folks, in spite of time, in spite of the loss of our sacred customs, in spite of Death that pursues them in their bodies."

And, gently, she murmured:

"How I know it? Because your dream, Sir, is perhaps also mine!"

And it was from that day, ever since that conversation in the rosy light of morning, that I would set to work, often absent-mindedly, but with the most confident enthusiasm!

\* \* \*

Well, everything happens sooner or later.

One fine August day, one of the hulls is ready; we warp it out, at low tide, on top of the reef, some two hundred metres further, with the help of tackle and rollers. The Chinese workman helps us; we take our time over it, we only go forward by little jerks, but we get there; that is the way the Chinese work, and also those who know the Chinese; at the edge of the coral plateau, the hull is launched into the channel.

Three weeks later, the second hull goes to join the first. The platform, the distance apart, the stepping of the masts, everything has been calculated ashore; the bolt-holes for fixing the chains are drilled; all that remains to be done now is the joining-up, the finishing touches; and the hulls will be harnessed—if I have not made a bloomer in my measurements.

A few days only after the launch of the two hulls, the platform is in place: the *Kaimiloa* is born!

The foremast is stepped first; it will help us in setting up the mainmast. We do all that by ourselves, without anybody's help—a point of honour.

I then delete from the usual questionnaire of visitors a

fair number of question marks. For instance, they can no longer repeat to me: "How the devil are you going to join them up together?" Or else: "Do you think that you will manage to fix your masts in the centre of that platform?" etc., etc.

All those questions are to-day condensed into one only, no less irritating: "Do you think that all 'this' will hold together?"

And soon comes the day, the first great day: the day for the trials.

\* \* \*

Need I confess it? I am a little anxious!

However absolute the confidence one may have in oneself, one has one's moments of doubt. For months past, in fact from the time the scheme for a double canoe became known, hundreds of persons, obviously well intentioned, have been criticizing me, dissuading me from going on.

I am aware that Tati himself is tortured by his unalterable confidence in me; he has suffered from waves of depression, which the poisoned air of scepticism that surrounds us could not fail to raise within him. Yet I had concealed from him a good many causes for discouragement, for the most pessimistic echoes reached my ears by indirect routes: a naval officer, passing through, who came to visit me at the "Château" (that is what they used to call the tent at Honolulu), at night-fall, and having therefore been unable to see anything of the construction, except perhaps a few planks and a few ribs, hastened to write to Paris that my scheme was mad, that such a boat would never hold together on the water, that all this appeared to him to be a novel mode of suicide! Some very dear friends inform me at once of the opinion of that "professional man," and beseech me in all haste to give up.

Our Consular Agent, each time we meet, never fails to ask us: "Hullo! And how are your two coffins getting on?" Cheerful, isn't it!

An admiral of the American Fleet, visiting Pearl Harbour, says to me during dinner:

"If your craft reaches France, I'll send in my stars."

Yet I want the boat to be French. Mr. Pecker applies to the Consul-General at San Francisco; but the Consul-General has already given his opinion, at the very beginning of the construction:

"Let Captain de Bisschop content himself with his nautical knowledge as a captain, without wishing to add to it that of a naval carpenter!"

The French ensign is refused me; then they find a supple and diplomatic formula which will permit them to withhold it whilst looking as if they were desirous of granting it: they will insist upon a visit by Veritas or Lloyd; the agent will be called upon to declare in writing that my boat will be capable of voyaging . . . to France! Moreover, it will be necessary for my mate and me to declare in writing that we assume all responsibility for our attempt! The last condition alone is possible. I give up. All the same, the Consular Agent brings me a little French ensign.

"In my private capacity," he says to me. "I said something about it at San Francisco. They recommended me to say that the Captain was to know that this gave him no right whatever to make use of it!"

"Don't worry, old man! I shall hoist it all the same, when the day comes!" If we are to make a hole in the water, I would just as soon have it at the mast-head, and if we are not, if the gods let us arrive in France, well, then we shall see . . . maybe they will forget my breach of discipline."

Though one may, without being a braggart, think

oneself endowed by the gods with average wisdom, it is useless, for one cannot help being impressed by the majority of human beings, when they unanimously agree to list one amongst those stricken with mild lunacy.

True, I endeavour to persuade myself that I am not inventing anything, that the idea of a double canoe, said to be novel, is but an extinct idea which I am reviving, and that moreover every idea said to be novel has at all times had its detractors; but I cannot shake off a shadow of anxiety. Yet that shadow is one day dispelled: the day on which the *Kaimiloa*, facing the open sea, is for the first time about to use her own sails; at that precise moment, my confidence, hitherto disturbed, is transformed as if by magic . . . and strengthened. Why? A mystery! But at that moment I "feel" that everything has been done to enable the *Kaimiloa* to wage a war with the sea on even terms. And I know that the *Kaimiloa* will face the sea, the oceans, all the oceans, victoriously.

## Chapter IV

### THE FIRST TRIAL: THE TWINS' FIRST STEPS

IT is at the first light of dawn, on the 11th of October, 1936, that the *Kaimiloa*, in great secret, leaves her anchorage of Ala Moana, towed by a friend's yacht, the *Arcade*. The sun, through a golden dust, has just outlined in the sky the silhouettes of Diamond and Coco Heads, when the little ship, emerging from the pass of Kewalo, meets for the first time the swell from the open sea, the sea itself, when, in short, she makes her entry into the world.

As soon as the tow-rope has been cast off, we hoist sails, and the sails begin to flap dismally! There is not the least breath of wind!

But now the violet smoke, which was just now rising straight up into the motionless air upon the hills of Oahu, is depressed, announcing to us the imminent coming of the breeze.

Presently I see puffs which, from valley to valley, are descending towards the sea.

The first comes along, frolicking on the glassy sea, playing with the red hues formed by the rising sun; close to us the water is still smooth, still calm . . . but my heart thrills . . . how are the sails going to take it? And how is the *Kaimiloa* going to respond to the sails? Will the *Kaimiloa* know how to obey? How are the rudders going to work? And it is then, just as I am about to know, even before knowing, that all my anxieties are dispelled. Why? I do not know! But I

feel that my boat will steer herself: one might say that the light breeze descending from the hills is driving before it the black clouds of doubt.

The puff freshens, and, as if curious to know the strange sailing craft that awaits it, hastens on; the water is rippled, is iridescent with joy: the sail hitherto motionless between its bamboos, shudders, fills, stands still. The *Kaimiloa*, taken by surprise, pivots slowly on her own axis, stands in towards the open sea of her own accord! Is it to make me understand? I adjust the sails, the rudders; I lash the tillers: the *Kaimiloa* darts towards the south and I feel rising within me something infinitely sweet, like a caress; sweet and disturbing at the same time; it seems to me that the *Kaimiloa* has already got her soul; she wants to tell me that she will know how to be worthy of her great ancestors.

I change the course, I check the sheets, I adjust anew the tillers, and again I lash them. Plucky little boat: obedient and supple, she pursues her course, mine, ours, straight, perfectly straight, without the least deviation, without the least sheering. The caress within me becomes more real; I shudder with pleasure; Tati's face has gradually brightened with a smile. It is all I can do to drive from my mind the perfidious insinuations of the Evil One, who is endeavouring to spoil my joy by soiling it with conceit!

\* \* \*

The breeze freshens still more; I point east, outside Koko Head; the sea, near that cape, has a bad reputation among Honolulu yachtsmen; in fact, the sea becomes hard, short, choppy, the connecting beams begin to work, the springs too are working, the hulls are struck, but everything works without jarring, smoothly and harmoniously!



I dare not yet cry victory! For I know, through experience, that that brings bad luck: I have often noticed that the right to feel happy at the bottom of your heart, and to feel sure of yourself, does not imply that of singing out aloud your joy and confidence . . . unless you touch wood? And even then!

Yet I cannot prevent myself from vigorously slapping Tati's shoulder, shouting to him:

"Not so bad, eh? . . . for youngsters!"

As soon as people on land catch sight of us out at sea, motor-boats and sailing-vessels, yachts of all kinds, get under weigh and come inquisitively to investigate our first gambols.

Queer! Everything seems to be holding together, she is not breaking in two; not this time at any rate!

They come, they go, they pass us, they sail around us, and on their decks there seems to reign some surprise: so here at last is that famous *Kaimiloa* at sea, but, a surprising thing, the two audacious but crazy Frenchmen are there, idle, indifferent, stretched out on their cabin roof, on their backs, smoking cigarettes!

"How do you steer her?" some one cries in passing.

I reply:

"These twin children are so very intelligent. Look at them, they have just been born and there they are walking without help . . . and how beautifully they keep in step . . . eh?"

Towards two o'clock in the afternoon, however, we are compelled to haul in: the main shrouds, made of steel wire, have been cut too close, or rather the ropes used for that purpose have stretched beyond our expectation, the rigging-screws, screwed right home, no longer allow of taking in the "slack."

Moreover, I had not fixed a piece of wood which, without any further help, might have counteracted the downward pull of the mast from stern to stem, and consequently made the use of shrouds unnecessary; it was not through negligence, I had done it on purpose: I wanted to see whether the system of stepping the mainmast, in the centre of the platform, was really not too idiotic.

But in that short sea (the most treacherous and unpleasant for a small boat of the size of the *Kaimiloa*), the heavy mainmast, lacking the support of its shrouds, and above all of the buttress the missing piece of wood would have provided, is beginning to have too much play—too much, but all the same it holds fast, and I say to myself:

“Will not this assemblage resist absolutely all the buffets of the sea, all the violence of the wind, when the final fixing is complete?”

Confidence takes root within me, absolute confidence! Good God of wooden ships, I shall retain that confidence. The *Kaimiloa* will reach France!

\* \* \*

On the whole, there is nothing surprising in the fact that our adventure should have aroused and continue to arouse curiosity: our arrival in the Hawaiian Islands, coming from the “Forbidden Islands” of the Japanese Mandate, the strangeness of our craft, the tragedy of her wreck, the loss of all my documents, our almost immediate decision to start off again in a new boat, and one of a vanished type, a boat of legend, as well as the announcement made by the Press of the goal of our expedition and of the researches we had intended to carry out, were doubtless quite enough.

Nevertheless, I was struck dumb with surprise and

confusion when I learned soon afterwards, through the large headlines of the American newspapers, that we had both suddenly become "famous scientists, famed professors."

I then explain to the reporters that it is sometimes possible to take an interest in a so-called scientific question without deserving the title of Scientist, that one may even possess on some of these questions views which may appear original, to have concerning them theories somewhat personal without at the same time being keen on "professing" them. Nothing doing. We are labelled "Scientists" in the eyes of the crowd, and we have to act up to our label.

That amiable little oddity in the American character is, I think, but the resultant of two pleasing tendencies: the one which inclines it to an exaggerated love of titles, ranks and honorific appellations, which makes it call "Captain" the owner of the most modest craft, or "Commodore" the President of a Yacht Club, and the other, which is the result of a polite hospitality which is manifested by a determination to honour the veriest stranger passing through its territory. Maybe there is also a more subtle reason for all this: all those human elements, so diverse, which have come from all the corners of the Old World, have formed the young American Nation. And all those human elements of the Old World on a new soil which has merged them, unified them, have taken on a new heart, an enthusiastic heart, beating harder and more generously than our old hearts.

I have therefore to become a Scientist in spite of myself, but, what is more serious, I am being compelled, in the pleasantest way in the world, to act like a Scientist.

I am carrying out studies, research! Very well, but what?

I am studying the mystery of Polynesian migration! Oh! How interesting! What about some lectures?

I endeavour to oppose the force of inertia, it is in vain; I urge my poor mastery of the English tongue. They assure me that I succeed very well in saying what I want to say; I try to *entrench myself behind a deplorable* accent, which would render the majority of the audience unable to understand me, and they go so far as to assure me that my Latin accent, far from being a handicap, will add an additional charm to what I have to say.

\* \* \*

So I have to comply: I give my first lecture and I am due to give more; for the first causes something of a stir in the habitually placid waters of the local scientific world.

I counted upon amusing my audience by the music of my Frenchified Americanese, on making it forget the somewhat revolutionary theories which I put forward.

And I am disappointed! All those solemn scientists remain, and listen to me to the end with the greatest earnestness!

I am mortified; the Latin charm of my conversation didn't work.

For it must be said here, that general theory on the maritime migrations of the Pacific which I am putting before the local scientific world (and Honolulu, with its Bishop Museum and the staff attached thereto is one of the most famous centres in the world for Polynesian research), seems to them very daring: quite candidly, I have the mad audacity to upset several established theories, and to think inversely to the majority of these gentlemen.

On that subject, I can only say a few words. For the

thorough study of it, the statement of proofs supporting my theory would require one or several fat volumes.

Here is, on broad lines, the present state of the Polynesian problem.

Ever since the discovery of the Pacific, the following riddle has been propounded. The early navigators having discovered in the two geographical regions of Malaysia and Polynesia, natives possessing common ethnical characteristics, connected them together. Now, Malaysia being an important human centre, and Polynesia merely a few islands, scattered over the great ocean with a relatively small population, it was decreed that the more important group was the parent group, had given birth to the less important group. Now community of ethnical features does not always imply community of blood. It may, as is well known to-day, simply mean contact or trade.

So the problem which presented itself at first to my mind was the following: was that contact effected from Malaysia to Polynesia, or vice versa? Was it perhaps reciprocal?

Now, as is generally admitted by the scientific world, the migrations took place within historical times, that is to say at a period when the apportioning of lands and seas, the atmospheric conditions (as also those of navigation, and *maritime* migration) were almost identical with those which we observe to-day. In that case, the generally admitted theory of the peopling of Polynesia by Malaysia (or by any other western human centre), is difficult to conceive, I might even say straight away, inconceivable.

As a sailor, I endeavoured at first to study and to clear up the maritime difficulties of such a migration; they are numerous, very numerous, too numerous!

To strengthen my conviction, to be able to analyse the proofs put forward which might confirm the generally admitted theory, I studied that new science, so absorbing in its different branches—modern anthropology. And I was rewarded.

One unknown quantity in the maritime problem, which I was particularly keen to study in order to establish in my own eyes a definite proof of my revolutionary theory, related to the equatorial counter-current. For, if many scientists were agreed in admitting the practical difficulties of navigating from west to east against the trade winds, they clung nevertheless to the existence of the equatorial counter-current and to the help which it may have given to the early Polynesian navigators. Was not that counter-current marked on most charts as flowing majestically right across the Pacific from west to east?

Now, if we consult the precise results of all the studies made concerning the Pacific equatorial counter-current (studies which may be found condensed in diverse *Nautical Instructions*, published by the Hydrographic Services of the maritime world), it will be seen that in the present state of our knowledge there are very few things that one can state definitely either about the rate of speed or the direction of the current, or even that it exists at all!

That is why, in the course of the three years of navigation of the *Fou Po*, the little junk could be seen sailing about and lingering in the most unlikely spots.

I know that many scientists, for whom the ancient hypotheses have often become unassailable theories, have gone so far as to say that, if the present state of our knowledge forbade us to rely on that current to explain the migration from west to east, nothing forbade us to

suppose that the ancient Polynesians knew more about it than we do.

And it is here that is to be found the weak point of those studies of maritime migration which were never carried out seriously from the nautical point of view! People were always ignorant of the fact, for instance, that in order to know the existence and the life of a great ocean current, it is absolutely necessary to have at one's disposal an accurate method of astronomical navigation.

No one has ever probed to the bottom what the actual methods of astronomical navigation of the Polynesians could be.

Upon that question alone could be written an entire book which would lack neither interest nor humour.

Certain students have discovered, in order to explain these migratory voyages, "methods" to which I would hardly dare allude had they not been advanced with authority and received support. They tell us that the ancient navigators, in order to find their way about the great ocean and the lands to be reached, made use of indications furnished by the direction of the swell, of the breeze, of the crests of breaking waves, better still of the flight of certain migratory birds, and . . . best of all, of the flight of flying fish!

Others, the majority, prudently fortify themselves by a vague assertion which would, in itself, suffice to solve the problem were it not so vague.

"The ancient Polynesian navigators," they say, "knew the stars . . . and made use of them." Do not try to obtain anything more precise on that rather special chapter, on the possible instruments or the methods used, you will be disappointed. I prefer those who merely say: "They sailed away, guided by Tangaroa, the god of Oceans."

After laborious research in the astronomical knowledge of the Polynesians, capable of permitting them to make ocean voyages, I am bound to say that all I could discover upon that question did not stand examination. Maybe others will be luckier!

I even met scientists, and not the least important, who built up an admirable theory proving the reality of a migration from the Marquesas to the Hawaiian Islands, according to a legend, a legend studied and commented upon in the light of the famous "sacred calabash," of which all students of Polynesia have heard speak. You know that sacred calabash alleged to have been used by ancient navigators in observing the height of the Pole Star and deducing therefrom the latitude of their position.

That instrument had the advantage of possessing, at least, an astronomical possibility; it was bound to, having been invented in its entirety by an officer of the American Navy who liked his little joke! I had the good fortune to be able to collect in Honolulu the history of the birth of that famous instrument of navigation which never existed, though the imaginary use it served still exists!

In short, I am of the opinion that that branch of ethnography which may be called nautical ethnography, hitherto unknown or neglected, deserves to be placed in the forefront of a study of maritime migration, and I remain persuaded that, thanks to it, someone will at last be able to throw a little real light on the unknown quantities and the mysteries of Polynesian origins.

\* \* \*

The day after my first lecture, the newspaper throws us bouquets in its editorial. We have become "the living examples of the struggles and the sufferings faced



by those men of science (struggles from which they often know how to emerge victorious), in their search for something new, or different, or of yesterday, unknown. . . ."

They must "take off their hats to men of our stamp," for we are "pursuing our way and accomplishing exploits in spite of almost unsurmountable barriers."

"*Rien moins's*," (nothing less), as they would say in Marseille!

\* \* \*

But let us return to the *Kaimiloa*.

That first trial is not conclusive; another is to be expected; a long time has already elapsed since the first outing. Certain persons, afflicted by the gods with a tongue as uncharitable as it is active, cannot help singing around, to a compassionate tune, the collapse of my hopes. That French captain, audacious but crazy, has always wanted to have his own way; he has at last realized, afloat, the impossibility of his "double canoe"; many points in the construction have appeared to him to be defective, insufficiently studied. He has at last understood that that platform between the two hulls, and its bonding connections, would not have held its own in a somewhat heavy sea—a very easy thing to foresee, moreover!

How can those good folks know that the reason which urges me *not* to attempt new trials, is, precisely, the confidence which I have in the *Kaimiloa*?

To be sure, to attempt new trials seems to me a mere formality, intended mainly to give back a little confidence to poor Tati, who, I feel it once again, is tortured by doubt, and weary with his continued efforts to hide it from me.

\* \* \*

All the same, one fine day I make up my mind.

For that second outing of the *Kaimiloa*, I want to put the two hulls to a real test. I need a particularly short and heavy sea (a sea of the kind which is to be met with when the mistral is blowing in the Gulf of Lion, for instance).

Deep-sea yachtsmen tell me of a region quite close to Honolulu which enjoys the most perfect of bad reputations in that respect; it is the channel separating Molokai from Oahu. They even go so far as to assure me that if my double canoe does not break up into little separate pieces in a good blow of the trade winds, in that wild and tormented sea, I shall be able without the least apprehension to treat myself to the pleasure of making it face the fury of Cape Horn!

I fix the date for the second outing for the beginning of November. When the day comes, a nice north-easterly breeze is blowing. The weather-man's forecast (Meteorological Bureau) announces for the next day a slight decrease in the intensity of the wind and a clear sky. As the reputation of that prophet of weathers to come is strongly established in Honolulu, I can be as sure as anything that we may expect to see the north-easterly winds amuse themselves as usual in contradicting him; they will therefore blow with growing intensity, and the sky will be very much overcast.

All is ready on the *Kaimiloa* (or seems to be ready) for a new communion with the sea. All we have to do now is to hold ourselves in readiness, in view of the possible appearance of small unforeseen circumstances. Let them come, and we will manage somehow, it won't be the first time!



We have not long to wait.

Towards four o'clock in the afternoon, with the utmost secrecy, once more towed by the *Arcade*, the *Kaimiloa* emerges from the pass of the Kewalo basin, and bowing gracefully to the open sea at each long undulation of the swell which breaks into wild rollers on the reef, makes her second entry into the world.

At that second entry she owes it to herself to run headlong into her first adventure.

And what an adventure!

It held our hearts in suspense for three long days, and three still longer nights, on the brink of tragedy.

## Chapter V

### THE SECOND OUTING: WILL SHE, WON'T SHE, GO?

FROM the early toddling of my twins, I had insisted on noting regularly their actions and their reactions in a log book; I had confidence in them; I did not for one moment doubt that they were, through that document, to acquire authentic letters of marque, their first patents of nobility.

Those odd daily notes, hastily jotted down on paper, will doubtless seem cold to anyone who has not lived through the tragedy; maybe also a little obscure sometimes. I prefer, however, in order not to take from them their character of authenticity, to transcribe them here just as I read them to-day, two years later, on leaves still moist from those waters that gave the log book such a bad time between Molokai and Oahu.

#### Log Book

Second outing of the *Kaimiloa*, from Monday  
3rd November, to Sunday, 9th November 1936

#### *Monday, 3rd November*

Weighed anchor at four o'clock in the afternoon, towed out by the *Arcade*; on board the *Arcade*, Papaleia-iaina and a few friends of the owner.

4.30 p.m. cast off the tow rope in the Kewalo Pass, hoisted sail; nice breeze from east-north-east; sailing with wind on the quarter towards Palmer's Point. Rounded Palmer's Point two miles away (average speed from

Kewalo: 6 knots). Not so bad! A little oil lantern, left in the starboard boat, is upset; a risk of fire; a bad omen?

11 p.m., breeze eases away; calm. Only to freshen again in gusts, then to settle frankly towards midnight in the north-east.

Rounded the westernmost cape of Oahu three miles off, continued on the port tack. Sea getting rougher. 3 a.m., sea becoming very rough, gone about. Bad visibility—have neither map nor compass—idiot!

*Tuesday, 4th November*

6 a.m., sea becoming dangerously rough—short and strong waves, ship is putting her nose under; sailing through squalls of spray. I keep an eye on the fastening of the platform.

It seems to be holding together! Violent shocks, but they seem to be harmoniously withstood by the play of the hulls and their springs. It's got to hold together, damn it all! 8 a.m.; one of the main sheets snaps, we lower sail for repairs; are soaked; again putting her nose under—one of the planks of the platform forward is washed overboard—it wasn't even lashed! We might have managed to retrieve it, but Tati seems disgusted. Could he once more be consumed by some sneaking notion? In the end, I ask him,

"Anything wrong?"

He answers darkly:

"No, only a bit sea-sick."

I know him, something else is the matter; there may perhaps be a little sea-sickness in it, but a great deal of something else. Queer: we are heading for a new crisis . . . let's wait . . . let's pretend we don't notice.

It is an awful night—Damnation! The two hulls are leaking! What is the cause of it? Inspection of the

bilge; nothing abnormal; inspection of the hull, nothing either; we bale out every two hours. Tati appears to be falling to pieces.

At five o'clock in the morning, went about to make for land—one never knows!

Reached the land to leeward of the pylons of the wireless station, on the north-east coast; we are all in—haven't slept, baling out every hour—impossible to have a wink of sleep.

Spotted the leak: it comes from the small forward hold, the caulking of the watertight bulkhead had not been carried out to the top—and when the hold is full, the water filters in, or rather, to be more accurate, flows freely into the cabin. That means, therefore, a ton of water in the forward part of each boat, and, consequently, sailing with our tails up. We must look like a bird! Nothing amiss with the platform, and yet, what a time she is having! All goes well! We shall be able to deal with that leak.

She is putting her nose under as far as the mainmast: what a beastly sea! Two more planks from the platform are carried away. Good-bye! They are in no way concerned with the joining, it is only the loss of some wood!

As soon as we gather a little speed, the water filters more than ever into the cabin, and the cabin floor is beginning to float about at the end of an hour—sinister! If only the sea would go down a little, we might repeat the dodge of the *Fou Po*. It will have to be done, somehow. Otherwise we shall die of fatigue and lack of sleep.

I feel that Tati's trouble is coming to a head—for the last twenty-four hours we have only exchanged indispensable words—unpleasant atmosphere! At 8 a.m.,

when the time comes to bale again, he stops and says to me suddenly:

"If anything gives way, where are we?"

I look at him surprised:

"Why, we are at sea!"

"Yes, but where will the wreck drift to?"

"The wreck? The wreck? . . . That's a good one! We'd drift towards the rocks on the coast."

He says: "O.K.! Let her rip!"

And he kicks away the bucket.

He is green, he seems all in. I keep silent; I force myself not to let him see my anxiety, for I have just had a hunch that a disaster is imminent; I begin again, without saying a word, to bale out every hour, in the routine way. Tati looks at me, and, like an automaton, resumes his share of the routine.

The silence which reigns about us has something heavy in it, intolerable. The bilges are once more dry; we shall have to begin again in an hour's time, then every following hour—a night of nightmare.

The platform is still holding. We are sailing with her nose under water. If nothing snaps now, nothing ever will snap.

### *Thursday, 6th*

We have tacked and re-tacked; at break of day those cursed pylons are still there, to windward, however, this time. God, let that devilish wind veer a little so that we may round the point!

Lack of sleep . . . only my nerves hold me together. At 8 o'clock, the storm bursts—within Tati! He pours out to me, at one go, as if the sooner to get rid of it, everything that is on his chest. And it is a long story, a new confession. I realize it gradually as he speaks. But what a story! Fortunately there remains in him his

confidence in St. Anne of Auray. That kind Mother of the Virgin, queer sort of work he gives her to do! Enough for her to earn her sainthood, if she had not done so already.

What patience those in Heaven must have! Tati went off, knowing well that we would be wrecked; he has prepared everything to save himself, and he is certain that, thanks to the divine protection of the Mother of Christ, he will succeed in saving his skin whatever happens.

Poor *Kaimiloa*, it seems to me that I am the only one left to love you, to-day, I am the only one to have confidence in you, I and *Papaleiaiaina*!

He has understood that that "cursed boat," as he calls her, would never break up, and that he, Tati (I wonder why?), would be forced to continue the voyage. He beseeches me not to persist in my plans, to give up my studies of the eastern Pacific, to give up persisting in sailing for months and months against winds and currents, but to return to France as quickly as possible. He begs it of me as a favour.

Immediately I adopt a great resolution, within a few seconds; that is settled, I shall do what he asks, for the sudden idea of returning to France sooner, makes me see from a different angle the goals to be reached; that solution, Tati's, is far from being unpleasant to me. I foresee a slightly longer stay at Honolulu, to await the favourable season. I shall return later, freer in my movements, towards my Pacific.

We bale again, with renewed ardour: our fatigue seems to have disappeared for a moment, I even venture on a few jokes: Tati makes merry!

What a strange character: you watch him collapse like a rag, and five minutes later he plucks up hope again.



Another sleepless night; but our morale is better and we feel less cast down than we did the day before. Can sleep be only a habit?

Yet there's something tragic in the air. The sea howling outside, the water tossing in the bilges, and that storm lantern smoking in the cabin atmosphere, an atmosphere heavy with humidity and salt.

### *Friday, 7th*

That leak must be stopped. We are all in! The sea seems to be getting rougher still. We cannot struggle any more. A further bit of bad luck, and we would not have the strength nor the brains to react . . . where are we? All night we have tossed in the waves rather than sailed, and, fool that I am, I had not even brought a compass . . . and a dark sky, laden with low clouds which break only to pour upon us regular waterspouts, makes everything blacker still . . . neither compass, nor chart of the islands. We are close-hauled; all goes well if the wind has not changed direction, but to estimate one's course from a wind which may have veered capriciously, and that close to land, is too much like tempting Fate. I am anxious. Where are we exactly? If only Tati can remain unaware of my disturbed state!

Towards 3 o'clock in the morning, I notice a vague light through the clouds—the moon! I take the opportunity of deducing its rough bearing, very rough. I try to bring my mind back to the clear nights spent before we weighed anchor in the Kewalo roadstead, the long hours of calm and of dreaming spent in watching the moon rise into a starry sky, and, judging by the hour, I deduce its declination, its very approximate altitude above the horizon, a chance bearing. It fits! The moon is where it should be, or nearly so! The sea and the wind are therefore the same as yesterday, as the

day before yesterday; we must be tossing somewhere to the north-east of Oahu, in the Molokai channel.

Again that Molokai! A wave of tragic recollections passes before my eyes. I drive it away. Then suddenly I have the impression that I am sailing in the Polynesian manner. That seems to me to be quite logical, on a *Kaimiloa*: I recover my confidence.

At 6 o'clock in the morning we are submerged by two violent waves: we had heard them coming, they catch us broadside on; under the shock, the water in the bilge raises the floorboards and spurts and splashes from all sides. We stare at one another, a little pale, without saying anything, we half open the door of the cabin, we point the feeble light of an electric torch, whose damp batteries are about to die out, towards the chains, the springs, the joining beams.

Tati again says to me:

"There is nothing to be done! It has survived this time, the pig will always survive!"

I go about at break of day to reconnoitre the land.

At 9 o'clock, through a sinister colouring of grey, are outlined the ridges of the Pali. I draw a little closer. Damn it! Again those cursed pylons! Having swotted thus all night, only to gain four miserable little miles to windward! It makes one despair! In such a sea, with our two forward hulls full of water, we shall never manage to gain enough in order to round the point. If only that cursed wind would veer a little, just a very little. What difference would it make to God? It wouldn't hurt anybody; there surely is not a sail out in such weather. If only the sea would go down so that we might use a brace and bit, and make a hole in the forward hulls! That is the only way of getting out of this fix.

I have just drawn nearer to land, the sea is less rough there. I lashed Tati by his belt with a strong length of rope, and I held him, leaning out over the bows, balancing himself on his legs. Armed with a brace and bit, he was able to drill two holes above the water-line. The water in the hold spurts out, a level is set up. Henceforth the hold will remain only half full, an improvement! The starboard canoe seems clear, the caulking of the water-tight bulkhead, at the base, seems to be holding. The water no longer enters the cabin.

Have tried the same operation on the port canoe; impossible, with his body half submerged and battered by the sea, Tati breaks the centre bit inside the hole; we give up; all the same, we shall only have one boat to watch now. That half-success brightens up my mate's countenance a little. I take advantage of it to attempt a new tack. What a pig-headed man I am!

Oh! Good St. Peter, do make your damned breeze veer, three points only, three little points, and we can clear, and with a soldier's wind, reach the roads of Honolulu in style.

### *Saturday, 8th*

Go to blazes! St. Peter is deaf, or else he is playing with us; yet sailors ought to help one another. He has certainly caused the wind to veer, but on the wrong side. That decides me to give up the struggle! Bear away, lads! The sea takes us abaft the beam; what a sensation of rest for the boat and for ourselves! We are doing seven knots, the waves are breaking, still vicious; the breakers appear to be chasing us, overtaking us, losing ground, and tangling up to hit our stern in a wild growl, yet *Kaimiloa* does not seem to bother much about them. Now she is going with a following wind; finished the battering-ram forward, broadside; the

water no longer splashes in the bilge of the cabin. What an impression of calm, of security! Gazing at the vain fury of the sea, I feel a sudden desire to shout at the wind the customary insult of sailing men of former days, once the difficulty was done with: "We got the better of you all the same, eh, you bitch!" But I refrain. One must be polite with so great a lady!

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, we round again, near enough to touch it, the northernmost point of the island; the north-easterly sea comes and breaks against it with the noise of thunder, leaving as a mark of its vanquished rage only a long trail of foam racing towards the south.

Soon, sheltered by the land, we are running on a level sea, the wind is playing on it, it descends in gusts from the hills, softens, dies, and revives. The *Kaimiloa* waits for it, receives it, turns, pirouettes the better to make use of it; gently she nears land.

We need an anchorage, we need sleep—sleep at any price. I think I recognize the bay of Haleiwa; under the failing breeze, we sail along a rock that juts out from the coast. Tati takes a sounding: "Four fathom! Rocky bottom," he calls out to me.

"Anchor!" The anchor falls perpendicularly, it is time, the breeze has just died away. Quickly, let's lower the sails, and, without taking the trouble even to furl them, to shake them out, we throw ourselves in a heap on our bunks! . . . And we fall asleep like animals.

*Sunday, 9th*

Ah! What a sweet night! I wake up with the impression of having returned from a void. But is it truly a void? It is an illusion, for I seem to have drawn from it a new life. Maybe it is possible to draw Life out of Void?

Our eyes open upon a sky which has become clear again; a few little clouds, tinted a delicate pink by the sun which is about to rise, race in the sky on the other side of the island. The hills disclose their outline more clearly, are made to stand out by deep violet clefts, to the sides of which cling the green trails of forests climbing to storm their summits.

How fair life is: my heart feels as light, my soul as joyful as the air in this rosy morning!

My stomach is tugging at me a little. We have not had much to put between our lips since we left. Confound that Tati! He explained that to me at the time of his "confession." We were bound to be wrecked, therefore why carry aboard the ten days' provisions as intended? Has he already forgotten Molokai? Perhaps he feared apoplexy at the time of sinking if his stomach had been too full! Ah, well, never mind! To our anchor stations! Before tripping the anchor, using the brace and the broken bit, repaired somehow with bits of string, we make a hole in the hull of the port canoe; queer idea, to make holes in your boat before weighing anchor! It is because people do not reflect sufficiently on the principle of communicating vessels.

We hoist the sails, which are reflected in a smooth sea, looking as if it had not wakened up yet; in order to please us, the breeze springs up a little, freshens, toys with our patience, and the little rascal, in order to tease us a little more, begins suddenly to veer to the south-east, that is to say dead ahead; this is going too far! Yet she is cheated! Not a grouse, not an oath! Besides, the sea is barely wrinkled here; we can beat to windward.

I make one of the tacks close, very close, to the coast, near a spot that I know well; for a moment I dream as my eyes rest on the green line of a hill covered with algarobas, where during the last few months I so often

came to camp for part of the night. I cannot, with my eyes, see the great red traditional glow of the big fire of branches; I cannot, with my eyes, see those craggy places in the black rocks where the sea was pleased, as it ebbed, to leave behind a little of its still clear water for the moon to play in; I cannot, with my eyes, see bathing in it, a beautiful luminous, almost unreal body, so redolent of Nature, and in such perfect communion with her that each time it seemed to me to be but a graceful play, a disturbing fancy of the moonbeams! But in my mind's eye I can see it all again so clearly. . . .

There comes to my mind the decision which I took yesterday, at the time of Tati's new confession: the *Kaimiloa* shall sail towards France via the Cape of Storms, which is also the Cape of Good Hope. I console myself; I give up those studies which I wished to carry out in the Eastern Pacific, that is understood—for the time being. Then I think with satisfaction that for this new voyage, the order of the winds will not necessitate such an early departure. In fact, I shall have to wait in the Hawaiian Islands until the Fiji cyclone season is over.

To weigh anchor only towards the beginning of March, would be the wisest course; that gives me, therefore, five months more to spend in Honolulu. Five months! How many more times will the great red glow of wood fires rise into the night, yonder, in the centre of the green line of the algarobas, how many more times shall I see again, in those little pools of calm water, hollowed out of the rock, the harmony of the moonbeams come to life?

We round Palmer's Point, towards 9 o'clock; immediately the sea hardens, but is fairly manageable. The starboard tacks bring our nose under, and the water rises again in the little forward holds. The holes we

have made are becoming insufficient. It is because the direction of the sea is five points different from that of the wind, therefore dead ahead; and the short distance between each wave is, for the *Kaimiloa*, exactly what it should not be: "You toss me and I'll toss you!" as sailormen say, or as my friends of the Australian luggers of Broome would say in more realistic vein, when speaking of a boat that loses headway at every pitching, "She stops dead! the bastard!" An expression which I shall certainly not use, being the acknowledged father of these twins.

We lose on the port tack what we make on the star-board tack; it is enough to make you despair!

"We'll never get there," grumbles Tati.

And I reply:

"We shall arrive, for I mean to sleep ashore to-night. . . . The *Kaimiloa* shall be at anchor to-night . . . at Pearl Harbour!"

"At Pearl Harbour! . . . but it is forbidden!" he reminds me.

He is quite right. Pearl Harbour, the great military port of the Hawaiian Islands, what am I saying, one of the greatest military ports of the United States on the Pacific, made up its mind, for the last year especially, jealously to guard its secrets. Some months ago, I inquired of the Admiralty whether I could be allowed to put in there when the day came for the trials of the *Kaimiloa*.

It was agreed, but on condition, however, that I should give the Admiralty forty-eight hours' notice. Very pleasant! But how to-day can I put myself in order? When a few more tacks will presently bring me to the channel, and when I fully mean to drop my anchor at the bottom of the bay an hour or two later, facing the elegant Pearl Harbour Yacht Club?

We meet an American destroyer: I hail her, and notify her of my intention to enter the military port: it is an urgent matter! We are in a leaking condition! Officers on the bridge wave their arms, stop to focus their binoculars upon us, and again wave their arms, more vigorously. They are far too busy with their eyes to open their ears! At last they see them, those two famous red and yellow hulls, at sea this time and with all sail set! Doubtless they have been so used to seeing them lying on the sand, between Waikiki and Ala Moana, that they must have seemed to them to have been put there for all time, only to beautify the landscape!

Never mind! Come what may! Admiral Yarnell seemed to me too much of a sailor, and consequently too much in love with boats, not to excuse the first steps, even the first false steps, of one of them; the *Kaimiloa* is so wee, so young, so inexperienced!

I boldly enter the channel at 2 o'clock in the afternoon; the reefs, through which the channel was dug, break the turbulence of the sea. A very fresh wind is blowing, and it is a leading wind. We are doing ten knots; the sea furrows gracefully between the two hulls (one can almost see the keels) and boils up again towards the stern in a long and beautiful undulation, it looks as if the little *Kaimiloa*, entering the great war harbour, wants to play at being a torpedo-boat, and astonish the locals. She is wasting her time: this is Sunday, and everything seems to be dead in the Arsenal; Sunday, day of rest, even for military activities. . . .

I make a few small tacks at the further end of the channel, where the breeze is toying with us. Aft to starboard, I notice a few grey silhouettes of warships, topped with black smoke, then to port, at the far end of a very blue bay, some fine white triangles heeling over, racing one after the other: it is regatta day at the



Yacht Club. We pass, handsomely, to windward of one of the races. . . . Bravos! Cheers! and Kodaks!

At three o'clock, within a few metres of the wharf, the *Kaimiloa* drops anchor . . . ouf!!! God be praised!

Soon we are invaded by sightseers: I am ashamed that the *Kaimiloa* cannot show more smartness. The flooring inside the cabins is floating about on the water which we neglected to bale out when we entered the channel. All these yachtsmen are greatly impressed. There is good cause for it!

An American Colonel, a distinguished yachtsman, head of the Army Intelligence Service in the Hawaiian Islands, is surprised at my "cheek." I imagine that he too is alluding to that "audacity" in facing the open sea on the *Kaimiloa* of which we have already heard so much. No! His surprise is due to something quite different.

"What cheek," he says to me in perfect French, "to enter Pearl Harbour like this, to amuse yourself tacking about in the channel, and that with your tricolour ensign flying at the mast-head!"

I put on an idiotic air (I do this very well, without any effort):

"Is it so forbidden as all that? Had I known, I would have hoisted the Japanese ensign!"

He bursts out laughing; then, recovering, seeming somewhat vexed:

"Don't you know that Pearl Harbour is one of the most secret harbours of the American Navy, and that even I, a Colonel in the American Army, and, as you know, an Intelligence Officer, am obliged to apply for an authorization from the Admiralty for my own yacht . . . and you . . ."

"Well, I must have put my foot in it!" I confess,

contrite. "To-morrow I shall call upon the Admiral to apologize. I shall explain to him that, having gone through merely to enter the yachts' bay, I hardly had time to discover the secrets of national defence; and if the Japanese, last year, in the Marshall Islands, had simply let me go through with my *Fou Po*, without having had the preposterous notion of keeping me a prisoner for a fortnight, it is quite probable that I would not have noticed . . . some of theirs!"

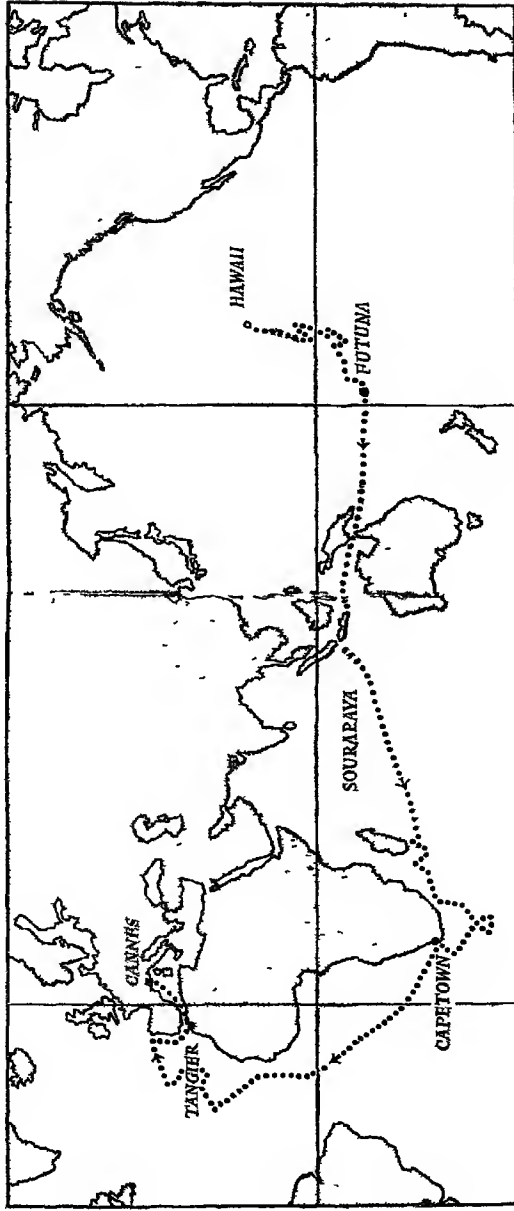
And I think within myself: "Oh, you dear Colonel, you know nothing of the Navy in spite of your luxurious yacht and of the nautical elegance of your uniform! That I should have entered Pearl Harbour in this fashion will surely annoy the Naval men! But they will only show their annoyance in a very gentle manner! For I am pleased to hope that if they reproach me with anything, it will be an almost brotherly reproach, as is meet among men of the sea. I am pleased to hope that sooner than calling to order one of their Naval brothers, even gently, they would prefer to blackguard all the Colonels of their land army collectively!"

At nightfall, Tati and I leave our sturdy little boat at rest, with her anchor well gripped and her sails nicely furled, we charter a passing car and have ourselves put down in front of Ah Fong's restaurant, in the Chinese quarter. Then, having recovered from our emotions as a result of the delicate Chinese meal, I rush out to join . . . but that is nobody's business.

A few days later, leaving her anchorage at Pearl Harbour, the *Kaimiloa* returns to her moorings in the elegant little yacht harbour of Ala Moana. She covers the few miles between the two places under tow.

The tugboat is the *Hualakai*, a little motor-sampan

SKETCH MAP  
OF THE CRUISE OF THE  
"KAIMILOA"



belonging to a true Honolulu sportsman, Mr. A. Powelson. I particularly want to cover those few miles without the help of my sails, to avoid the inevitable tacking which might be ill-interpreted, as we leave the great Naval harbour. For my friends of the American Navy, who are surely the last people to be attacked by the virus of that disease of suspicion, now spread about the world and commonly called "spionitis," seem to me to be showing the first symptoms of the disease! Who would not excuse them? Are they not living in Hawaii, in the very centre of a hot-bed of infection? Just think, among the 380,000 inhabitants who people the group of islands, there swarm over 150,000 Japanese (of whom, by a curious chance, the majority live at Oahu, in the island of Honolulu, and in the neighbourhood of Pearl Harbour). Now everybody knows that spionitis is in a way the antidote for another more dangerous disease, espionage, from which every Japanese, male or female, suffers from birth; it is so much a part of their organism that it has become, in every latitude, something of a condition necessary to their existence.

\* \* \*

The double canoe is to remain motionless at anchor for months, awaiting the favourable season for sailing south, and people are again beginning to show surprise. What does that long rest mean? They are beginning to whisper again, trying to spot in her that hidden defect of construction which seems likely to forbid her ever to face the risks of battling with the open sea.

The interest which the American Press is showing in the *Kaimiloa* has not on that account slackened for a single instant, but it is also keen on knowing the cause of the delay. I cannot explain (without giving details which Tati does not at all wish to be made public) the

reasons which have suddenly made me give up the studies I had begun, nor my decision to return to France as soon as possible, by sailing towards the west, and renouncing Panama for the Cape of Good Hope.

But they are probing, they advance a thousand conjectures, and soon discover, easily enough, an apparent explanation, which, being of a sentimental nature, soon goes round:

"I know," says to me one day a particularly inquisitive reporter, "the reason for your prolonged stay with us; my colleagues are idiots not to have discovered it."

"Ah, yes? You know? And what do you know?"

"Oh!" he replies. "I have discovered the secret, simply by remembering what, in your country, you always say to yourselves when you wish to explain away a mystery, or to discover . . . a murderer!"

"The deuce! And what is it we say?"

With one finger he points to his detective brow, and, slowly, with the purest Yankee accent, he lets fall these words:

"Well, I said to myself, '*Cheurchez "le" femme!*'"

And he makes off, pleased with the effect he has produced, and with his own perspicacity!

The next day, there appears in the *Journal*, on the front page, a sensational article, with, in enormous letters, these very simple headlines: "Our 20th-century Ulysses has found his Circe!" . . . "The bold Captain's voyage is delayed by a fair enchantress." And then appears a large photo of the fair enchantress, surprised a month previously on the *Kaimiloa* by an indiscreet photographer when she was in the act of painting a Polynesian fresco inside one of the cabins. Under the photo, the *Journal* very courteously (and generously too, wishing no doubt to excuse that sentimentality in the "bold Captain") adds: "And who would blame him?"

From that day, the interest in the *Kaimiloa's* expedition grows still stronger. For it has caused an air of mystery to float around the strange double canoe resting in the port of Ala Moana, an air of mystery in which two forms seem to move, with vague unreal outlines, which men in general and Americans in particular, would dearly love to grasp, to view more closely, for ever to make their own, and so bring colour and poetry into the dullness of their daily lives; two forms, Adventure and Romance.

## Chapter VI

### THE GREAT SETTING FORTH

THE great day is approaching, the day for weighing anchor, the real one this time, the one which is to launch the *Kaimiloa* from north to south across the Pacific without any hope of return or even of putting in to port for many months to come.

I have hidden as carefully as possible the exact date of departure, intuitively mistrusting a noisy start, having very often noticed that if *audaces Fortuna juvat*, the gods only grant their protection to the brave who accomplish their exploits under cover of discretion and humility!

I therefore want the *Kaimiloa* to disappear on the day fixed, from the shores of Hawaii with the sole *Alohas* of a few intimate friends, notified at the last moment.

Many of them have advised me to give a party, before leaving Honolulu, a Hawaiian party, a *luau*: this boat which seeks to revive the remembrance of the glorious hours of the nautical past of the Polynesian people owes it to herself to be the cause of a ceremony. It may be that the *Kaimiloa* will write a new page in the history of the islands. They would add, in order to tempt me, that this fête would moreover have the great advantage (each of the numerous guests having, according to custom, to bring me his presents for the feast) of loading the double canoe with provisions for the long months to come. I naturally nodded assent, quite decided to have my own way: thank Heaven, I had not yet been long enough among civilized people to let

myself be intoxicated by the vain fumes of advertisement and publicity. Remembering moreover that Tati-bouet and I had been able to achieve the construction of our boat without receiving or accepting the slightest aid from the American society which, in the islands as on the mainland, is quite naturally generous, it would have been ungracious on my part, at the very moment of sailing, to have tarnished the proud reputation of the free-born *Kaimiloa*, by an action which evil minds (they are to be found everywhere) would have deformed into an ultimate appeal for public assistance.

Yes, I am keen on maintaining the *Kaimiloa's* reputation; this for a reason very easy to understand. Unable in the course of this new voyage to pursue my studies, since this time I am compelled, by sailing westwards, to reach France as quickly as possible, my sole purpose is to accomplish this voyage, without any sort of fuss but in all the better style; it has become an obsession with me . . . amplified to the extreme limit as a result of a wound to my pride.

To be sure, I can reflect without a great heart-pang, without vexation, that no single member of my great French family has deigned or wished to acknowledge this child of mine whom I wish to launch upon the seas! My twins are but bastards, without nationality, they have been judged unworthy of bearing gloriously the tricolour!

To desire to weigh anchor silently, and to realize that desire are two very different things. Just you try to conceal from the Press of America the small events of the day . . . and of the following day!

Yet we are compelled to place our orders for provisions. It gets to be known, and without being very much of a Sherlock Holmes, a reporter concludes from it that this may well indicate preparations for



departure. So, when the American Export lorry unloads opposite the *Kaimiloa* its bags of rice and its tins of canned food on the quay, men are there, some with cameras, others with notebooks and pencils. They wish to know the date, the exact hour of weighing anchor; I entrench myself behind the uncertainties of the weather forecast, I remain vague and fondly imagine that I have thus rounded that difficult cape of publicity.

Two days later, on Sunday, 7th March 1937, I therefore imagine that I may depart nicely, without fuss! Alas! While strolling through the town yesterday, I noticed among those little newspaper boys signs of unusual excitement. They were shouting the big event. A glance at the paper shows me a big headline:

"The French scientists prepare to sail Sunday for the South Seas."

I buy a copy of the paper; a long sequence of the most diverse photographs accompanies a sensational article: one sees there a last glimpse of the *Kaimiloa* in harbour, sundry aspects of the loading of the provisions, and, of course, a fresh picture of the "fair enchantress" who, they repeat, is to a great extent responsible for the lengthy stay of the Captain in Honolulu!

On getting aboard this morning, I am therefore hardly surprised to see already on the quay several groups of sightseers on the look-out. At 10 o'clock, the quay is covered with people, and, as we are alongside, I am beginning to find those hundreds of eyes, glued to my every movement, very unpleasant; acquaintances, people we have had dealings with, soon come running up, all with the same reproach on their lips:

"It isn't very decent of you to go off like this without having notified us."

What can I answer? I can find no reasonable excuse;

I content myself with mumbling or smiling idiotically.

At noon the situation passes from pitiful to tragic: this time the quay, on the point of overflowing, pours a portion of its humanity on to the boat: Kodaks, cinema cameras, requests for autographs, indiscreet questions.

Heaven be thanked, the "fair enchantress" is at my side, and naturally draws upon herself the greater part of public attention. We must flee!

Tati, who is more shrewd, is running about the town. More shrewd? I ask myself that with some anxiety, for he too must be doing some delicate navigating among human beings. I know that at the present moment he must be running riot among two or three love affairs of different degrees of sentimentality . . . towards which his Fate has led him defenceless. I find him again at lunch-time, very pleased with himself; during these last hours he has managed to steer with wise prudence; I congratulate him! He has been able to avoid the last reefs; his morale appears to me to be perfect and fit for weighing anchor: that is what matters most to me.

At 2 o'clock in the afternoon, we board the ship; the port of Ala Moana and its surroundings are crammed with parked cars. I should never have believed our adventure to be so popular. I avoid meeting the eyes of that excited crowd, in order to keep a pleasant recollection of it; to be sure, am I not certain to recognize in some of those eyes that gleam of unhealthy curiosity to be seen in the eyes of the crowd which enjoys, in the pale dawn, watching the erection of the guillotine and awaiting the arrival of the man who is condemned to die?

Are we not also, for the great majority of these people, men condemned to death? Friends have come down in greater numbers, and bring us, together with the traditional, *leis*, some sweet things to eat: they

remember our arrival at Molokai and doubtless wish to save us from the renewed anguish of hunger and thirst.

The time for departure strikes: the *Kaimiloa*, suddenly lightened of some 40 visitors, recovers on the water a perfectly seaman-like appearance; owing to that fresh influx, the quay, already swarming with sightseers (many of whom are endeavouring to keep a doubtful place on the edge), only just fails to overflow into the water.

It is again my amiable friend, Mr. Powlison, with his *Hualakai*, who undertakes to lend a last hand to the *Kaimiloa*, a tow past the reefs.

She comes alongside; we relieve our shoulders, adorned with numerous garlands of flowers, the *leis* of the *Aloha*, and begin to cast off the lines.

The *Kaimiloa* moves a few metres away from the quay . . . only the crew is aboard now . . . no, a lady passenger, the "fair enchantress" Papaleiaiaina, who wishes to be the last to leave the boat!

The *Hualakai* tautens the tow-rope; then (may my dear land of France forgive me!) I desire that all those good people who have come down to have a last look at the *Kaimiloa* should be fully aware that this boat, leaving for her great fight with the oceans, although by name and by shape a Polynesian, is well and truly French! And contrary to all established laws, violating all the regulations in use, I bend on the burgee halyard the three colours of France, and, my heart beating fit to break, I hoist it at the mast-head.

At that moment, there goes through the deeply-moved crowd something which I can feel. As soon as the double canoe moves away from the quay, that mass of humanity, a moment before noisy and joyful, has suddenly become silent, it has just been seized with a feeling of anxiety. The *Kaimiloa* with her two hulls must

appear to it to be so small, so fragile, so low on the water when facing that great ocean which it can see and hear, quite close by, above the line of reefs, already swept by the powerful trade wind and white with breaking waves. I see a stout Hawaiian lady, whom I do not know, who, alone, waves an arm. Her face is quite upset, and her arm, stretched out towards us, makes, in a broad gesture, the sign of the Cross, her blessings! Doubtless she thinks that we are going to die as died many years ago, and under the same conditions, certain of her ancestors; like us, trustful, they had sailed away upon the great sea adventure. . . .

That solemn silence of the crowd lasting for the whole time that I am bending the ensign on the halyard, appears to me to ennoble my plain signalman's action, and gives it suddenly the grandeur of a religious rite!

Gradually, as the colours of France rise, the crowd comes to life again: and when my ensign, having reached the mast-head, flaps proudly in the breeze, it is hailed with a tremendous cheering.

I am deeply moved! And, as we make our way towards the channel, I think:

"Brave little *Kaimiloa*, my child, it is your turn now! Don't give the lie to your father! Show the world that you are worthy to have been adorned with the three colours of France; it is up to you now to win your nationality, and to impose it upon all."

As we skirt the reef, along the new park, we are escorted by hundreds of cars which, at a slow pace, but with a great hullabaloo of horns and klaxons, wish us a pleasant voyage. The *Hualakai*, having reached the little basin of Kewalo, slackens speed in order to enable Papaleiaiaina to leave our boat and, by means of a dinghy sent to fetch her, to board the *Hualakai*; hence-

forth the *Kaimiloa* is carrying only her sea-going crew.

One single tie still attaches her to the things of the land, that little bit of tow-line which we are about to cast off in a few minutes.

Suddenly Tati appears anxious, but he shows an anxiety of a novel kind, an absent-minded sort of anxiety that ties him to the shore: his eyes are raking it from point to point, from a waving handkerchief to a hooting car! He is looking for someone! I have no time to ascertain his trouble, indeed we have just emerged from the Kewalo basin and it is blowing very fresh; the breeze, thwarted by the land, shows its ill-temper in violent gusts. The sea at the edge of the reef, coming in from the open in a long swell, breaks against it with the noise of thunder, marking the limit of the sly barrier of reefs by a long, tortured line of breakers; behind it, the ocean, a deep blue, is covered with white horses. Here the breeze is northerly; out there it will be nor'-east; good for us! This is your weather, *Kaimiloa*! A clear road, old girl! A clear road, that is what we need!

I shout: "Let go all!"

The sails are hoisted. Bounding, the *Kaimiloa* points to the open sea. A few motor-yachts escort us, stick their noses under for a few minutes, and then turn back disgusted; the little *Hualakai* follows us, panting to catch us up. I see standing on the cabin roof, dangerously clutching the mast with one arm, a silhouette, it is Papaleiaiaina, who with her free arm stretched out towards the sky in the direction of the fleeing double canoe, seems to implore the protection of the gods.

Shall I heave to, in order to wait, to have a last look at the beloved silhouette, to hear in the breeze a last cry of *Aloha*? . . . No! Point to the open sea! The little motor-launch in her cloud of spray gives up the

chase, goes about, and in her turn makes for the land. Soon she is but a little bright spot on the blue water, appearing, disappearing in a trough of the waves . . . and gets lost within the channel.

For the open sea! Heading for the open sea! The sea becomes rougher, comes aboard "green" forward: the *leis*, which I had flung at the foot of the mast at the time of weighing anchor, are carried away by a wave; and I see in the wake the heavy garlands of flowers rising and falling to the swell as did just now the *Hualakai*, then disappearing as she had done. Maybe someone will find them to-morrow, carried above the reefs and making bright spots along that little beach shaded by the algarobas! Astern, the island of Oahu is marked in outline; large white clouds cling to the summits, merging the crests with the sky. Night falls; above the dark horizon all that remains is a big, diffuse glow—the town of Honolulu!

For a moment I look, in the freshening breeze, at that distant brightness which in its turn is about to disappear.

Ahead of me stretches the great Pacific, a struggle, perils maybe, but also the sweetness of the long months of solitude, the sensation of having to overcome those 3,000 miles of water before finding the first place of call, that little island of Futuna, lost to the north of the Fijis!

I am dreaming, scarcely believing, so sudden was it, in the reality of the parting, in the reality of the great adventure upon which I have just been launched, dragging with me my comrade, when, poking a distorted face through the door of the port canoe, Tati calls to me:

"Captain! Captain! We have sprung a leak! We are going to sink!"

## Chapter VII

THINGS ARE GOING BADLY! THINGS  
ARE GOING BETTER!

9th March

WE have been at sea only 48 hours, and the voyage does not promise to be particularly brilliant! I have been wondering how it is going to end. Tati is demoralized, he wants me to land him on the first islet we meet! If he is so very keen about it, I might grant him that little satisfaction, but the point is, there is no islet anywhere near: the first coral atoll is at least ten to fifteen days' good sailing away!

Yet I am not worrying unduly. If he is absolutely determined in his "despair," if the gods do not wish it to take on a more tragic form, I am quite sure that when the time comes to leave the ship to be marooned on a desert island, he will feel, without quite being able to explain it to himself, that the floating *Kaimiloo* is still preferable to the atoll. Upon the atoll there is nothing: not a human being, on the *Kaimiloo* there is still his Captain, who has no reason for wishing to court death! Nor looks like doing so! All these years he has been saying to me: "I don't want to die!" What about me?

When, on the first night at sea, I was disturbed in my reveries by the cry: "Captain, we have sprung a leak! We are going to sink!" I followed him down into the cabin and, to ascertain exactly where the leak was, I lit the two paraffin lanterns. I did it with calculated slowness, with a smiling calm: to show a mastery of myself which I do not always possess has become in me

an affectation; for Tati, who fancies that his character has changed so much since the time of his confession eighteen months ago that he has become, in his own words, "another man," has remained exactly the same. He has the same qualities, the same defects, the same dodges. One of his whims is occasionally to wish to exaggerate to me the importance of some danger; and, being caught no doubt in his own trap, he announces it to me in such a way as, he thinks, will make me lose my head. Tati would love to see me, at any rate once in his seafaring life, lose my head; I scent so well in him that somewhat childish pleasure, that, in many cases, I receive his news of imminent disaster with a little smile which often I would not assume had I not seen through his tactics. And as Tati cannot understand the cause of that indifference when facing danger, that smiling contempt which I affect, he kindly attributes it to a "courage" which I do not possess, and can only attribute the absolute confidence which I keep in myself to a mysterious gift which undoubtedly comes from a secret pact with the devil.

So I quietly light the two lanterns, and begin, more quietly still, to inspect the bilge of the hull.

I knew, alas! before we left, that we should be taking in water, that we should continue to take in water. Before weighing anchor I was to undertake two small jobs, about an hour's work, a mere little hour, and I did not do them: one consisted in piercing some extra holes into the forward hull in order to speed up the emptying of the holds; the other was to caulk the hatches. I did not do them because I knew that the principal influx of water took place at that part of the deck which the forward joining beam rendered inaccessible to the caulking iron and mallet, and that this would last as long as the whole voyage; but that if the existing holes turned



out to be insufficient at certain rates of speed, there would still remain to us the resource of going at a more comfortable speed.

But to foresee the remedy to a disease is certainly not worth the application of the remedy before the disease: I could have made my holes and caulked my hatches before going to sea; what prevented me was solely that inquisitive crowd that encumbered the quay on the morning of weighing anchor, whose eyes, idle and most probably critical, would have been glued to every one of my movements! Although I adore doing small jobs, I hate doing them when surrounded by sightseers. If only people knew what courage was necessary to build the *Kaimiloa* on the beach at Ala Moana, with those thousands of visitors, advisers, and enlightened critics!

In short, having stated all these good excuses, the fact nevertheless remains that we did not go to sea absolutely ready. There was negligence on my part. And while moving a lantern about along the so-called watertight partition, which allows the water to filter into the cabin over the top every time she pitches, *comme vache qui pisse* (to speak the language of the sea), I discover a new excuse, not such a bad one, either! I tell this to Tati. The fact is that ever since there have been boats upon the water, there has not been a single instance, whatever precautions may have been taken, of everything that is going to happen at sea having been foreseen before weighing anchor, and consequently one cannot accuse oneself of not being absolutely ready. Moreover, where would be the charm of navigating if, having wisely foreseen everything ashore, one deprived oneself of the pleasure of getting out of a mess at sea?

Has not that plain nautical maxim, which means so much in its concise form, any value: Ashore? Ashore! At sea? At sea!

And, at sea, a sailor must, if he is truly a sailor, get out of bad situations! Let him ever remember that grand prayer in which our sailors of Marseille implore their holy patroness, Notre-Dame de la Garde:

"Oh, good Mother! Have mercy on sailors who are . . . ashore!"

For, as far as those who are at sea are concerned: *eh bé!* let them get out of the mess!

Very well! We shall get out of the mess!

I raise my head. Under the grotesque light of the storm lantern, Tati's features seem to be distorted with anguish.

"It is my fault," I confess, "I ought to have finished that job before leaving. But with all those plaguey people!"

"That's not it at all, Captain!" yelps poor Tati, "that's not it; look here, shall I tell you, I have lost confidence—look at that water—it's all going to begin again!"

I try to chaff.

"You've lost confidence. But in whom? In yourself? Then all is well! There is nothing changed! You've never had any confidence in yourself, have you? During the last four years we have had a good many ups and downs, eh! And you got through safe and sound!"

He flings at me:

"I have lost confidence in the boat!"

"But have you ever had, for one single moment, any real confidence in her! Yes, maybe after the trials? But neither is that of any importance; the essential thing is, you see, that our two canoes should have confidence in themselves, enough confidence to continue on their way together, nicely, like little lady Siamese twins!"

That allusion to the fact that the two canoes might possibly part company seems to appal him.

"Well! Look here!" he shouts at me, as if he were ridding himself of a weight, "look here, shall I tell you? I have lost confidence in you!"

I burst out laughing (on the wrong side of my face, by the way).

"Neither is that of any importance, my good Tati, for I shall tell you that I always have confidence in myself, so much confidence that I think you may well dispense with having any: I believe that I have enough for us two!"

I tap him on the shoulder: "Come, my old Tati. I know what's the matter. Still a bit sea-sick, eh? Yes, I knew it! You'll get over it!"

"But that water, Captain! Look, we have hardly been at sea a few hours!"

"Well, we are going to bale out! Then we shall shorten sail, sail with the jib only! We shall lose speed, the forward holes will have time to empty themselves, and to-morrow it will be daylight!"

And Tati, like an automaton, begins to empty out, through the door, several scores of large buckets of water which I fill for him; again like an automaton he helps me to lower the mainsail, the foresail; I set the rudders . . . and the *Kaimiloa*, lightened, seems to thank me.

"See," I say to Tati, "we are not taking in any more water; there won't be any more water in the cabin to-night; at any rate, much less! Go and sleep; have a rest and don't worry."

I keep watch all night, crossing from one boat to the other to cast a glance at the points of entry of the water.

There is no ground for despair; but as soon as the state of the sea permits, we shall have to make several more holes in that hull. . . . Queer . . . to make holes in the hull of your boat in order to empty out the water!

*10th March*

Tati is as sick as a dog, and the sea doesn't look like going down. I said to him last night: "Lie down, tomorrow it will be daylight!" I was not lying: day succeeded night, but a dirty dawn, ugly with its wild clouds. The sea has that dubious motion which it knows how to put on when it is preparing a nasty blow. My pal will never be able to recover his morale in such an atmosphere. And yet he must! We set sail! We set sail dead before the wind! It is too late now to think, as the song says, "of turning back beating to windward."

Towards 8 o'clock the sea appears to become more manageable. Suppose I took this opportunity for blocking up the forward hatches? Armed with a good hammer, a few good nails and some rubber bands cut out of an old inner tube, I begin my work; without great enthusiasm, however, for on opening the hatches I notice by the absolute dryness of the wood that this is not the place where I must look for the cause of the inrush of water; my action has now merely a moral significance! What a pity that this discovery should make me do it without enthusiasm!

Tati, awakened by the blows of the hammer, crawls out of the cabin. I feel sorry for him! What a poor human nature ours is! That tall lad, who forty-eight hours ago was admired by sportsmen on the beach of Waikiki for his vigour, is now reduced to the state of a wreck. All that was needed was a little sea-sickness, aggravated maybe by a weakening of his morale. He asks me:

"Have you done the repairs?"

"Yes, I have blocked up the two hatches . . ." and I make a mistake in adding: "The sea seems to have gone down a little, don't you think?"

In saying that, I think that I am going to revive his hope a little, hope of the weather getting more and more manageable. But I soon understand that he is interpreting my thought differently: I have just spoken of an easier sea in order, so he thinks, to reproach him in a round-about way for having been the cause of the short distance we have covered since we left, under the single jib, and thus to express to him my desire to reset the whole of the sails.

So, not wishing to be behindhand, he suddenly proposes:

"Suppose we re-hoist the mainsail?"

Before even giving it a thought, I reply:

"Right-ho! Let's!"

While carrying out the operation, I think: "Look out, presently! We are going to gather speed again, and stick our nose under; the hold is going to fill again and Tati is going to have a new crisis!" Which does not fail to happen!

At 2 o'clock in the afternoon we are doing seven knots; it is marvellous to see the *Kaimiloa* driving southward. The breeze begins to freshen still more, and a glance inside the canoe confirms my sad previsions; the water, through the water-tight partition, has begun to squirt into the cabin. Tati, pale and dejected, is lying in his bunk; he pretends to be asleep, but I know that he is awake; the noise of the water splashing in the bilge must have been keeping him wide awake; I glide out of the cabin and lower more than half the mainsail.

I have hardly finished that operation, when my comrade's head reappears at the cabin door, more dejected, more miserable even than the day before. With as flippant a tone as circumstances permit, I say:

"Those confounded hatches, eh? I think that my work is not worth one of the nails used!"

He has dragged himself out of the cabin and now finds himself standing before me, with haggard eyes, made still more dim by the rings caused by sea-sickness.

"It is all over," he begins in a low voice, "it is all over!"

I am deeply sorry for him, and feeling that he has more to say, I wait. Then, like a flood-gate yielding suddenly to the strong pressure of the water that it holds back:

"I am all in, Captain! I am all in, I do not want to die. I beseech you, Captain, leave me on the first island we meet. That water! I am scared of that water; I do not want to die, I am scared! I have lost confidence! I am a coward!!!"

"Why, no, my good Tati, you are not a coward, else you would not have started. You do not want to die? Well, do you think you are the only one to feel that? Nor do I want to die! Life has never appeared to me so beautiful. Come, you'll get over it, it's your sea-sickness."

"No, Captain! No, it isn't sea-sickness! I no longer have any confidence! I am scared!" Tears well up into his eyes, and, the emotion in his voice stirring me to the bottom of my heart, he continues with difficulty, almost sobbing:

"I am deserting you! Yes, I am deserting you! Leave me alone on an island, I am all in, I am frightened, I am deserting you!"

I shake him by the shoulder; that simple gesture seems to calm him a little.

"You know quite well, Captain, that my idea was to return to China after the wreck, to build a junk like the *Fou Po*! You refused; it is your fault! This boat, it is your idea! At first I promised to help you, I did everything to that end. I was wrong, now I realize it, I had

no faith in it; I knew it would turn out badly. I am all in, I am a coward! I am a coward! . . . Leave me, I beseech you, on an island. I know that you will carry on alone!" And he adds, to my great surprise, and doubtless himself not quite realizing the lack of logic in his speech:

"Believe me, I shall be the first to come and congratulate you when you land in France!"

This is pretty astounding. What! He has no faith, either in the boat or in me, and yet he seems to have no doubt whatever of the complete success of both. He even pictures himself rescued from his desert island, already back in France to witness the triumphant arrival of the *Kaimiloa*!

I give it up. Is he, yes or no, persuaded that disaster awaits the *Kaimiloa*?

I refuse to clear up this mystery. We will see about it later. The essential thing at this moment is to shorten sail, to carry out again the same operation as yesterday.

"Come on, old chap, all right, I will cast you away on the nearest island! Meanwhile, we've got to get there, haven't we? Let's bring down the mainsail on to the deck, and let her run under the jib."

And, as on the previous day, the little boat, lightened, dropping from seven knots to three, bows less profoundly to the waves, and the water, recovering a decent level in the forward hold, ceases to filter into the cabins.

I spend a very unpleasant night. I have never seen Tati in such a state of depression; after so few days at sea—to turn back? It doesn't bear thinking about. To reach the nearest land, Palmyra, a small islet in the vicinity of the equator, will take us several long days . . . and so many things can happen in the course of long days at sea! If only that grey water, that gloomy wind,

that lowering sky. . . . Sunshine! That is what we need, sunshine! I would love to have sunshine!

*Thursday, 11th March*

The sea continues to run high from east-north-east. Squally weather. The breeze has a tendency to veer to the east; clouds pass over us, pouring down tons of water that make the cabins' roofs resound like the skin of a drum over-stretched. I prepare a dish of macaroni, the first real cooking of the voyage, with grated cheese, tomato sauce (the Italians couldn't beat it!).

Tati eats with a good appetite; good sign! His morale is reviving! We break the neck off a bottle of wine, what luxury! This time we have a well-stocked cellar: two cases, a present from French friends in Honolulu. Oh, the power of the wine of France! It would not take much to make Tati forget that yesterday we were sailing straight towards our eternal death!

A little rolling sets in at the end of the last glass; he does not even poke his head out of the cabin to check the "joining" and to assure himself, once again, with a surprised look, that "nothing has given way."

*Friday, 12th March*

The lee stay of the main-mast is about to give way: the tension is in a steel wire joining the hull to the platform at too acute an angle. I notice with pleasure that Tati is stepping down, without saying a word, into the starboard canoe; he takes down from a rack a spare piece of steel wire, and begins to make a splice. This time, we are all right! His morale has returned in full! At noon, his work is over; we do the repairs.

We decide to deal to-morrow in the same fashion with the port stay.

This time I prepare a dish of sauerkraut adorned with



sausages (the Germans couldn't beat it!), and we break the neck off another bottle of wine!

For the first time since our departure from Honolulu we see signs of life on the sea and in the sky: a shoal of flying fish scattering fanwise ahead of us, and two frigate-birds, hovering motionless in the stormy sky.

On seeing this company of flying-fish, I reflect on the almost miraculous rôle which a certain scientific group has made them play in providing a possible explanation for the ancient maritime migrations of the Polynesians. I remember that in the course of a lecture which I gave to the Anthropological Society of Honolulu, showing the difficulty, from the seaman's point of view, of explaining a voluntary migration against winds and currents without the aid of any astronomical method, there was a "doctor" who, in the most serious tone in the world, as a last resort expounded to me that those Polynesian navigators of old, to calculate their course and to find their way, used indications supplied by the flight of flying fish. On hearing him, I could not help bursting out laughing; how humorous are these Americans, thought I! I had made a mistake: the doctor was quite serious, for, immediately after him, a learned ethnologist got up and with a seriousness worthy of the post which he occupied and of the official science which he professed, supported with his high authority the explanation which I had taken to be a good joke! Consequently I modified my hearty laughter into a smile. I am not sure whether that smile was not more unpleasant to the scientist than the hearty laughter had been to the doctor!

Tati informs me that he has just caught sight of a big bonito leaping about alongside.

"Quick, let's rig out a line!" he shouts to me.

And whilst I am rejoicing at seeing him recover an

interest in the life of the ship, he gives me back the fish-hook.

"What is the use of it!" he confides to me, "I didn't check the list of provisions properly, and the American Factor Company forgot to deliver the salt; fried fish without salt isn't worth having!"

He is quite right, it isn't worth having, for the present at any rate. Yes, we are in the middle of the salt ocean, without salt. We shall do without, but it is rather quaint to know that our ship is overflowing with provisions: tins of beef, of sardines, of salmon, of sauerkraut, of kidney beans, of fruit, and Lord knows what, vast reserves of macaroni, rice, milk, coffee, tea; we forgot nothing, nothing except two kilos of salt!

To-day for the first time since our departure I take a sight, a pale sun appears between two clouds; for the first time too, I make use of the magnificent sextant which two friends, Mr. and Mrs. George Moffett, of Maryland, presented to me with charming delicacy a year ago. It is a marvellous instrument which consoles me for the deplorable condition in which that other sextant was found, the friend of so many calculations, in a corner of the ripped-out hull of the *Fou Po*! That sextant I keep as a relic. This new and luxurious sextant has a little gadget which delights me: inside the hollowed-out handle are to be found two minute electric batteries, which, by pressing a button, light up the vernier . . . and as one of my fads is to take observations at night! . . . Alas! If only I had had that marvellous instrument on the *Fou Po*! Here, on the *Kaimiloa*, farewell to studies, to long stays in tropical calms, drifting day after day in the equatorial currents, in quest of the mysteries of life on the Pacific!

What I have promised Tati, I shall carry out! Keep going! We shall return to France as quickly as possible.

We haven't done too badly with our single jib and a

scrap of foresail. Doubtless we have drifted a little from the anticipated course towards the west, but we shall soon make that up when we hoist all sail and follow a normal course: it won't be long now: the weather seems to be settling. Position at noon: Lat.  $14^{\circ} 47' N.$ , Long.  $162^{\circ} 10' W.$

### 13th March

Many shipbuilders would doubtless be surprised to learn that with our few square metres of sail area we have, from the time of our departure, averaged 85 miles every twenty-four hours; landsmen still more so, seeing only an outside view of the *Kaimiloa* (is she not as broad as she is long?).

At noon the breeze freshens a little, but with a very marked tendency to veer aft: it seems to want to veer from east to nor'-east; I cannot resist it; a bit more mainsail!

We are scudding along on the blue water; unfortunately we have not yet been able to pierce the discharge holes in the forward hull, and the water begins to filter into the cabin again. At nightfall, we bale out, and, in order to have a quiet night, we are shortening sail again.

### 14th March

Towards 4 o'clock this afternoon I experience my biggest "shudder" for many months.

I am quietly stretched out in my bunk, busy revising my calculations; Tati in the other bunk keeps turning over, picks up a book, tries to read, but, his mind being elsewhere, puts it down again. From time to time I watch him inclining his head towards the bilge which is uncovered by one of the planks in the flooring. At last, unable to contain himself, he says to me:

"There must be water in the other boat, I am going to do a bit of baling!"

He disappears.

A few minutes later I hear a call, coming from outside . . . which at first seems to be coming from a long way off: "Captain! Captain!"

I listen. The call is repeated, this time in a tone of anxiety: "Captain! Captain!"

I bound on deck and am struck with stupefaction: I have just seen the door of the starboard boat, where Tati was to have gone, closed and latched on the outside! There is no one on deck; that's done it, Tati has just fallen overboard! We are doing seven knots with a following wind, and the sea is raging!

The time it would take to go about, to make headway into the wind, to spot him. There is nothing to be done, it's all up with him! A cold sweat breaks out on my brow; I rush to the tiller to go about, to attempt the impossible; I shove the tiller a-lee.

My eyes are searching the wake, surprised at not seeing a struggling dot rising on the waves, clinging to the surface, wrestling between terror and the sharks—poor Tati.

The *Kaimiloa* is beginning to work round. A wave takes her broadside on . . . and then . . . then . . . I hear a voice, the same voice, still that of Tati, just as distant, just as full of anguish: "Captain! Oh! Captain!"

I yell:

"Good God! Where are you?"

"Here!"

"Where do you mean, here?"

"Why, here in the cabin! That bitch of a latch closed itself on me as she pitched!"

I open the door; he seems quite unruffled; my own features are distorted.

"You did give me a fright, I thought you were in the briny."

He seems so pleased to see me upset; it takes my heart some minutes to recover its regular beat.

## Chapter VIII

### THINGS ARE GOING BETTER AND BETTER

29th March

**L**AT.  $1^{\circ} 30' S.$ , Long.  $166^{\circ} 10' W.$ ; there is a nice breeze blowing from east-north-east; this morning we catch a big red tunny: we could not resist the pleasure of catching a fish. This fellow weighs nearly 100 kilos. What is the good of it! After having gorged all day, we are obliged to throw more than two-thirds of it overboard!

To-night, towards 9 o'clock, noticed the lights of a steamer on the horizon. I attempt to reach it by "Morse"; but I have expected too much from my knowledge as signaller: for the last two years I have not practised signalling, and, from the first words, I flounder; some cursed letters, those that I have forgotten most, are pleased to recur more than they ought to. In a word, I signalled (or I think I signalled) in substance, that "I am the *Kaimiloo*, a double canoe, having left Honolulu on the 7th March, for Futuna, with two Frenchmen as crew; will they kindly signal our passage, and all is well on board. . . ." Has he understood? If so, he is an expert in signalling: only he deserves to be called a signaller who can translate what one *would like* to say to him. To add to my confusion, the steamer, by way of reply, begins to signal lots of things at a speed which seems to me excessive; I can only interpret the first three letters of the sentence "G O T." In my vanity, I am pleased to believe that he says "Got your message," but once he is out of sight, I cannot help

thinking differently. Disgusted no doubt with my way of making use of optical signals, was he not repeating a sentence, evidently beginning with those three letters, G, O, T, but which, instead of continuing by "your message," were completed by the letters "o Hell!" . . . Go to Hell! Which, in good French, would mean:

*"Tu m'ennuies; va-t'en au diable!"*

*30-31st March-1st April*

Three days of fine sailing: sunshine, blue sea, blue sky, fair steady breeze. Nothing to do but read, work, dream . . . And to think that many people imagine that we are taking violent exercise!

To-day, April 1st, we are  $7^{\circ} 05' 5''$  S. and  $167^{\circ} 20'$  W. If all goes well we shall be at Futuna within a month, the period which I had given as likely to the journalists of Honolulu, merely to dazzle them! So much so that one of them, sceptical, speaking to me of the celebrated airwoman Amelia Earhardt, who was to leave Honolulu a few days after us on her flight across the Pacific, had replied to me:

"Come! Come! Captain, do not exaggerate! Presently you will try to make us believe that your *Kaimiloa* has wings, and that she will reach Sourabaya before Amelia!"

In order to relieve, or rather to occupy the night hours, I sort out a few notes which my friend, Dr. Stokes of Honolulu, gave me. These notes have but a vague connection with the Polynesian studies that I am pursuing, yet I want to put them in order so that the French public may be acquainted with them. It is a rather special study made by that scientist concerning the famous Captain Cook, the explorer of the Pacific, to whom is due the honour of discovering the islands of Hawaii.

It had shocked me to realize what a bad reputation the great Captain had left in the islands: all that I was ever able to read about him in Hawaii depicted him as a villain, as the responsible author of all the misfortunes and curses that later on fell upon the poor Polynesian race.

Cook, as well as La Pérouse, Bougainville and others of the noble line, had been the heroes of my youth; in the hours when I was able to free myself from the somewhat unhealthy spell which other sailors cast over me, those of privateering and filibustering, I loved to return, in my passion for the sea, to those very men who loved her enough to go in sole conquest of her.

I could not bear to see the memory of the greatest of them soiled.

As, one day, I was telling Dr. Stokes something of my disillusionment, I saw him smile in his little grey beard:

"You are not wrong!" he confided to me. "Keep your admiration for Captain Cook! Come and see me to-morrow and I will explain to you whence arose his unpleasant reputation, by furnishing you with all the historical proofs."

#### *2nd and 3rd April*

Beautiful weather still . . . light easterly breeze. We are comfortably doing our 110 miles a day. Night of the 3rd: stormy sea, cloudy sky, rain, short but violent squalls from east-south-east.

#### *4th April*

The breeze is slackening and dropping altogether; flat calm all night. We have not covered five miles in the last twenty-four hours. Fortunately the westerly current transformed them for us into thirty miles. Lat. 10° 06' S., Long. 169° 10' W.

5th April

Changed course: at 2 o'clock in the morning I stand in to reconnoitre a little atoll, Swains Island (about 170 miles north of the Samoa Islands); I shall not be sorry to catch sight of that land, in order to check the working of my chronometer. I leave Tati on watch, urging him to keep a good look out. When we are standing in for land, I always put "us" a little closer to the wind than necessary. It is a prudent habit, dating from the *Fou Po*! Yet Tati seems really to have changed: on the *Fou Po* he was snoozing all the time; on the *Kaimi-loa* he is always on the alert; ah, well, it is better to prepare for a possible return of sleeping sickness!

He caught sight of the tops of coconut trees straight ahead at sunrise. At quarters-time for coffee, at 8 o'clock, we are three miles south. I take a series of altitudes in order to verify the chronometer; I shall calculate it later on; for the time being I want only to enjoy the landscape presented by the first land we have met since our departure from Honolulu. It is always impressive to see those low islands, tufts of coconut trees, which a mere dazzling line of sand separates from the ocean, emerging barely a few metres above the abyss, here some 5,000 metres!

Who will ever explain what is now unknown in the problem of the formation of those coral islands! The great Darwin it was who, before anyone else, with his vast genius, gave an explanation of the phenomenon: according to him, the atolls are due only to a subsidence of the sea bottom, the land remaining at a sufficient level to allow of life and of the growth of these minute creatures which, in turn living and dying, construct on its shoals walls out of their calcareous skeletons and are thus the cause of a fresh emergence. Even to this day his explanation is the best that has been found: yet it



seems to be difficult to adapt it to certain regions of the Pacific. This theory might very easily be adopted for archipelagoes, such as the Fijis, where the study of the sea-bottom enables one to reconstruct with some accuracy (owing to the relatively important number of soundings) the variations of level, and thus to form a fairly precise idea of what must have formerly been the contours of lands of vaster extent, submerged to-day; but it becomes difficult to accept this theory for archipelagoes such as the Ellices, the Gilberts, the Phoenix, where each one of the little islets that compose them rises almost sheer from enormous depths and (as far as rare soundings enable us to tell) generally from even bottoms. The other famous theory that explains the phenomenon of emergence by the withdrawal of the waters of the ocean, could also, with a little imagination, explain the existence of coral plateaus. The unfortunate thing is that sometimes these are to be found perched too high on the hills of certain islands. Men have an instinctive tendency to decide that the earth was only formed for their sole use and for their sole convenience; it is their "abode" and, like any abode that they might build for themselves, they want it to be stable, solid and almost everlasting; they are reluctant to face the thought that it might undergo modifications without their authority; they prefer, in order to explain its changes, to shift the waters with which, they think, they have nothing to do!

In short, these two principal theories explain many things, but do not explain everything; doubtless it will be necessary to look again and elsewhere.

I have an impression that, in this matter too, we settle the solution of a problem without having discovered all its unknown quantities: the day when we know better the contours of equatorial bottoms, the base of those

coral formations, we shall perhaps succeed in throwing true light upon the life and pulsations of our moving terrestrial abode.

Swains Island, situated 100 miles to the south of Fakaofu, the biggest land in the Tokelau group, according to soundings taken in its immediate neighbourhood, is encircled for twenty miles round by an abyss 5,000 metres in depth. Thus it is completely isolated, geologically speaking, from all surrounding lands (Tokelau to the north and the Samoas some 170 miles to the south). On this little island, belonging to the United States, there lives one American family. I would envy them if the island were not so low, if, in its centre, dominating somewhat the green coconut palms, there arose an ordinary hill where I might set up my cabin. Then, better aware of the infinite horizon all around me, I could the better enjoy my solitude.

#### *5th-6th April*

Calm! calm! Some gentle breaths from the west, then from the north! The breeze too seems to find this corner of the Pacific comfortable: it idles there and makes no effort to go elsewhere. The sea and the sky are blissful; not one leaping fish, not one flying bird; both must, in nooks known to them alone, be taking their ease in the sun alongside the swell. Here too the swell is very capricious. It comes slowly, powerfully, from pretty well everywhere, sometimes from the north, then from the east, then the south-east, combining, increasing in amplitude, only to disappear suddenly and completely.

#### *7th April*

Calm, still calm; this has been going on for three long days. How grand and beautiful the sea is!

Tati is beginning to find time heavy on his hands. To comfort him, I say to him:

"Don't worry! There'll be a change some day! There is no known instance of a flat calm lasting for ever in any corner of the sea!"

I remind him of that cheery warning which my aviation instructor used to give to the pupils at Pau who were a little anxious when they were about to go in for their first acrobatics:

"Go, go without fear, climb into the sky and don't worry; you'll get back! There is no known instance of a 'plane having remained in the air for ever!"

And I add: "Same thing for flat calms and for little boats that go on the water! It doesn't last for ever: otherwise should we not still meet here those heavy Spanish galleons which in 1600 came from Mexico to the Philippines. Perhaps (what a pity it is not the case!) we might even find here, becalmed, some old double Polynesian canoes, the ancestors of the *Kaimiloa*; and as those tough sailors accomplished their marvellous voyages having intelligently brought their wives with them, we might find some descendants on their derelict hulls, the faithful guardians of the great nautical traditions! I should ask them where their fathers had come from when they were becalmed, towards what shores they were sailing, why they had sought to change their climes and their islands? I would then be able to inform the learned men of America and elsewhere, and would save them racking their brains to find fresh hypotheses in proof of older ones. I should ask them to be good enough to explain to me the use of the famous "sacred calabash" which some insisted on attributing to them, in order to replace the sextant, or, failing that, what their secret was for steering across the great oceans, how they read the course to be followed in the flight of flying

fish, in the swell in the breaking waves, how they calculated their exact position on the water and achieved a perfect landing on the shores they were seeking?

Towards 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the breeze rises from the north-north-east. We are doing our five knots. That is what must have happened to the heavy Spanish galleons and to the slender double canoes of Polynesia.

### 8th April

At break of day we pick out the highest summit of Savaï, the westernmost of the Samoas, south-south-east true.

I should dearly love to stop in all these islands that we sight. Alas! We have to make our way to France, as quickly as possible . . . to be able to return as quickly as possible. Next time, I hope, I shall have good instruments.

### 9th April

Night; violent squalls with rain and gusts from the north-north-west to west. The coast disappears in the grey mist: we round the westerly point of Savaï, ten miles out. God, how beautiful the *Kaimiloa* is when making for the south!

This night, a squall falls upon me unexpectedly from the north-north-west blowing hard enough to smash everything, I put my nose out of the cabin door, and am impressed by the dirty look of the weather: scarcely half an hour ago, there were so many stars twinkling in the sky!

I rush to the main halliard and, in a whirlpool of water that whips up my blood, I pay out.

A few yards of sheet to haul taut—then all clear; I jump back into the cabin. The whole operation only took one minute.

On an ordinary sailing vessel the sails would have been carried away, and that before taking in the two indispensable reefs, an operation that would have required at least four men (three wrestling with the sails, the fourth at the tiller). If only people knew the advantages of Chinese rig for deep-sea sailing, one would see nothing but bamboo sails on the seas.

A quarter of an hour later—flat calm.

There is in this region a strong 35-mile westerly current; the equatorial current seems to me to be capricious hereabouts.

#### *10th April*

Sight the little volcanic island of Tafahi raising its perfect cone 600 metres up beyond the horizon; geologically that islet belongs, together with Keppel Island, to the Tonga archipelago. We are in a region of reefs, indicated on the chart by the interesting initials P.D. (position doubtful). How I should love to be able to take a few soundings, to spend a few days, a few weeks, a few months, even a few years in such regions. But this time I must give up any attempt somewhat to rectify the charts. Instead of enjoying wandering about this zone and studying it, I steer a course all night to keep away from it, and I have an impression that I am not doing my duty as a sailor!

We have a pleasant westerly breeze, adorned with nasty squalls, fortunately of short duration.

#### *12th April*

Since yesterday the breeze has at last returned to the east-north-east. At noon we are abeam that strange islet Niuaufu, better known in the Pacific under the name of "Tin Can Island," because of the somewhat peculiar way the postal service has adopted to deliver the mails

there. For Niuafo has no harbour, and a landing even by a boat of small tonnage is only possible in very fine weather. Yet its population consists of a thousand natives and one European; until lately, when the mail-boat was signalled, a native would swim out to meet her. They threw the mail to him in a soldered tin. All went well until one day when a shark, who doubtless collected postage stamps, swallowed the soldered tin and a portion of the postman. To-day the natives again use canocs. They may give thanks to that shark who has recalled them to their ancient customs. Niuafo is a volcanic island about four miles in diameter, circular in shape, formed of a crown of cliffs, sheer and wooded, enclosing in place of the old crater a vast fresh-water lake 25 metres above the level of the sea. I have been told that the biggest coconuts in the Pacific are to be found there and that among the rare birds that inhabit it there is one called the *malua*, which lays the biggest egg that a bird can lay in proportion to its size.

Like Tafahi, Niuafo seems to be geologically attached to the Tongas rather than to the Fijis; certainly not to the Samoas. There are traces of subsidence.

Shape a course for Futuna! Another 170 miles to go!

### 13th April

I was hoping to sight Futuna before nightfall. Nothing on the horizon: the weather is clear, but hazy to the west. At night I lower sail and lie to to await daylight.

### 14th April

At daybreak we again point in the direction of Futuna: a fresh breeze is blowing from the north-east. There are many bonitos and fishing birds in this region. The majestic frigate-birds delight us anew by darting upon

the flying fish and catching them in full flight without ever wetting their wings; whereas the others, less elegant in their hunting, drop like stones and pick them up with a dive. The latter often let their prey be stolen from them by the frigate-birds, beak from beak. Those frigates are truly the lords of the Pacific birds!

At 9 o'clock we catch sight of the undulating line of hills of Futuna and Alofi, outlined on the white horizon.

I decide to pass between the two islands.

We draw near; instantly I am spellbound. The forest descends to the sea adorning the long white sandy beaches and clinging to enormous heaps of fallen rocks, cast down long ago from the tops of the mountains by ancient cataclysms. The island of Alofi seems deserted; a few abandoned cabins. How pleasant it would be to live there! We sail along the opposite coast, that of Futuna and its reefs. Opposite a village, which the chart shows under the name of Alo, men, women, children wade into the sea, run along the beach, wave palms, and make signs of welcome; then the coast becomes more rugged; our gay procession is obliged to abandon the chase. They sign to us to stop, to drop anchor amongst them. We call out that we are going to Sigave, a few miles further.

The breeze favours us, light and aromatic; we make our entry into the bay, scarcely gliding on the water . . . what a bustle in the place! Columns of smoke rise from all corners of the mountain: the arrival of a boat must be an event here! A crowd draped in *pareos* made of light colours is already pressing upon the wharf, a boat detaches herself; aboard there is a white man with a woman, and a few handsome specimens of brown humanity for working the boat; she comes alongside.

Where do you come from? How did you find this island? are the first questions asked, whilst the natives,

excited at first, then sheepish, repeat one to the other in their colourful language phrases in which the word *lua lua* keeps recurring, *lua lua* being the name given to the double Polynesian canoes of their ancestors.

The European and his wife are the only traders in the place—Mr. and Mrs. May, from Australia. They were told over an hour ago that a sail was in sight, that it had entered the channel between Alofi and Futuna, and they had laughed. What a joke, they thought; apart from the Messageries cargo boat which comes every three or six months from the New Hebrides for a few hours, they had never seen a boat. They only believed it when they saw with their own eyes the *Kaimiloa* poking the tip of her nose into the entrance of the bay; the natives so often played such pranks on them!

I offer them a cigarette; Mr. and Mrs. May stare at my packet of "Lucky Strike"; for a month they have been smoking nothing but native tobacco. For once in a way our boat can show a little luxury.

"You have come from Honolulu? With this boat?"

"Of course!"

"Where are you going?"

"To France!"

Mr. and Mrs. May stare at each other. They understand one another without saying anything: let these poor devils have a good time ashore before dying, they think!

"How many days will you be staying here?"

"A fortnight."

"Well, you will spend it with us!"

An hour later, revived by a good shower and the hearty hospitality offered us, we found ourselves with these two new friends for whom a common life of adventure on the Pacific, although lived under different conditions, produced a fellow feeling . . . we found ourselves facing a good whisky and soda!



## *Chapter IX*

### FUTUNA

I WAS particularly keen on calling at Futuna, because of its isolated position. Was it not also right in the middle of the great migration routes usually attributed to the mysterious Polynesians?

Few white men have inhabited it regularly, save one or two Fathers of the Catholic mission of the Marist Fathers. The history of many Pacific islands is known: first mentioned by an exploring vessel, called at by others, they became, once their position was known, a port of call and of revictualling for whalers: the whalers' traffic called in the trader; the latter was fortunately disturbed in his business of exploitation and of poisoning the native by the arrival of the missionary. And as the missionary, too often a destroyer of ancient customs, was forced for his own protection to appeal to the military authorities of the country to which he belonged, there appeared warships. Order being then assured by more or less official agreements with the native chiefs, other traders loomed up: commerce recovered its rights, the natives lost theirs.

Futuna had a great advantage over many other isolated islands; the cycle seemed to stop dead at the missionaries. Its natives have not yet to this day to suffer too much from the benefits of our civilization.

Futuna and her immediate neighbour, Alofi, form part (together with Wallis coral island, 120 miles to the east-north-east) of the French establishments of Oceania. The Resident for this little group resides at Wallis, an

advantage (if I may say so) which that island owes less to its importance than to the calm waters which its belt of coral protects, and which permit visiting vessels to find there a perfectly safe anchorage. For Futuna has but one little indentation on its westerly coast: Sigave Bay, and it is only a good shelter when the winds blow from the east: when a change of breeze is expected (frequent from December to April, which is also the season of tropical cyclones), the ship at anchor, limited in her swinging room, is bound to make for the open sea to take what is coming to her there.

Futuna and Alofi were discovered in 1616 by Lemaire and Schouten. Bougainville, in 1768, sighted them, but under a bearing which, placing the two islands in line, made him take them for a single one. He gave to that isolated land the characteristic name of "the Lost Child."

In 1801 arrive the first missionaries. The London Missionary Society attempts to land there its preachers and its cases of Bibles. It is the period when, under cover of religion, they manage to interest kind souls in England and elsewhere in a love for humanity, and when, under that label, they create powerful societies whose aims are not always disinterested.

The good Futunians, who doubtless prefer to live in their own way, give the new arrivals to understand that they can very well do without their precious company; realizing which, the agents of the London Missionary Society take to the sea again: they will grope elsewhere and will teach "savages" living in more hospitable lands how to lead better lives.

In 1837 the first French missionaries land; they too find the same hostility, but having doubtless a different ideal from the others, a more mystic faith in the necessity for their apostolate, they remain . . . which bestows

on them the honour of having the first martyr in Oceania: the blessed Father Chanel. A courageous and noble missionary figure!

By the light of the somewhat less superficial knowledge which we now possess of the native races of the Pacific, one cannot accuse the Futunians of savagery for that murder: the same deed would have occurred in any other place, for Father Chanel was guilty, on his arrival, of a crime known everywhere as *lèse-majesté*, a crime aggravated moreover by an attempt to usurp power.

To be sure, it was by command of the king of the island that he was murdered. Why? For reasons which, in Futuna as well as in London or Paris, called at that time for the death penalty! Had he not come, a stranger, to stir up revolt in the island, repeating to the echo that he was God's representative on earth, that the religion that he preached was the sole true one, that he held it from God Himself whose mouthpiece he was! Dangerous teaching! For H.M. the King of Futuna, carrying on the tradition of innumerable generations of other kings of the island, his ancestors, asserted to his subjects exactly the same truths; it was he, in Futuna, who was God's representative: the King of the Futunians is even more than the mouthpiece of the Divinity, more than his representative, he is the very reincarnation of the great Fakavelikere, his living tabernacle.

Those two representatives of a God, the same although under different names, could not help getting on very badly together: Father Chanel signed his own death-warrant. His execution followed soon after, just long enough for the natives and their king fully to understand the sense and the spirit of his teachings.

But it must be believed that every idea propagated with faith, every ideal lived to the sacrifice of oneself, bears its own fruits. *Sanguis martyrurum* . . . for Father

Chanel died and others came: to-day, the whole island is Catholic, so Catholic in its outward practices at any rate, that the Pope of Rome certainly has not in the whole world more fanatical observers, if not of the commandments of God and of the Church, at any rate of dominical rules; I shall refer to this again later.

To-day, the direct family descendant of Father Chanel's murderer has discarded for ever the tapa robe of her sisters, has renounced the flowers of *tiale* or of *fau* which adorned her hair, in order to cover herself with the heavy black cloth dress edged with blue, to girdle herself with a long rosary, and to conceal her black hair *under the white cornette*; and I was able to see her wearing that uniform with the same pride, the same dignity as her admirable sisters of France.

It is, I think, difficult to find a more picturesque island than Futuna, and above all than its neighbour Alofi.

Their deep valleys, furrowed by the long erosion of centuries, descend to the sea in green-clad fallen rocks, and the sea itself seems compelled to yield precedence to the power of that vegetation. In certain places on the coast, the verdure, swept forward by its impetuous vitality, continues its victorious storming towards the ocean, arrested here and there only by a simple barrier of fine luminous sand. Face to face with that nature, overturned by some ancient cataclysm, one's soul feels troubled by the disordered power of life and also by its tranquil poesy.

I am not a geologist, and I regret it; for Futuna and her companion must, through their rocks, have written a long and interesting story. In my layman's eyes, these two islands are but the result of immense uprisings of the under-sea soil, which occurred in successive epochs, each of sufficient duration to permit at every stage the

constructive work of the madrepores into plateaus. The island of Alofi, in particular, markedly gives that impression: it is built in tiers of three plateaus, sharply outlined and precipitous, like three gigantic steps towards the sky, each composed of corals deposited on a substratum of volcanic stones as a foundation. In each of these stories one discovers amazing caverns and grottoes, the study of which would rejoice the heart of a geologist. I notice also along the southern coast of Futuna, great blocks of basaltic rocks, clearly eroded by the action of the sea, the wear of which is to be found at least three metres higher than the present average level of the waters, as if that coast had suffered a vertical thrust in comparatively very recent times.

Apart from this, these two islands present no apparent traces of recent volcanic eruption: the legends (at any rate those which the early missionaries have been able to get together) never mention any: earthquakes, indicated by those broad fissures, some of which are very impressive, along the coral plateaus, have on the other hand been frequent. And the natives, in whom is to be found, as everywhere in Polynesia, an astonishing facility for poetizing the manifestations of the forces of nature, remembering always their old God dethroned by the God of the Christians, say that it is the great Fakavelikere, who has been so many years asleep under Alofi and who quite naturally takes it into his head to turn over on his bed occasionally, just to change sides!

The study of anthropophagy, in Futuna, casts new light on a practice which one is too often tempted to generalize as a savage custom.

One must never lose sight of the fact that anthropophagy has but one thing in common with cannibalism, the act of eating human flesh; the spirit which

dictates this act is totally different: the one is of purely religious essence, the other is the result of the coarsest appetites of human nature.

The anthropophagist will not kill for the pleasure of varying his menu, or through the necessity of maintaining a growing population at a level suitable to the possible productions of the island; an anthropophagist will not eat human flesh because he likes it; he will do it out of respect, I will even say out of love. The physical attraction of the food will be non-existent for him, and his action will take on all the grandeur of "communion." The son communes thus with the spirit of his dead father, and the spirit of a chief or of a wise man will communicate itself to the living. One can thus understand why, after a fight, the victorious warriors make a festival of eating those of their enemies who have fallen courageously, thrusting aside with disgust the corpses of those who did not know how to die! If you are prepared to admit that there is always in man a spark of the divine, a thing which "savages" understand as well as we do, there is no ground for accusing them of that practice (so long as it preserves the purity of its spirit); in fact, they do no worse than the "communicants" of other religions.

But, you will say, if it is true that they seek through that communion the transmission of a revivifying and divine principle, it is equally true that they feed like savages on the flesh of their fellow creatures. Well, there is nothing very different here, in principle: remember the dogma of the "real Presence"—the Bread and the Wine, the Body and the Blood.

Cannibalism on the other hand is but the degradation of a noble practice: man becomes a beast again: he wants to live, merely to survive. There again, if, as in the case of Futuna, it may have become, at a certain

period, a coarse necessity, must we be so very much surprised? Who does not know the sorrows of our animal nature, whether we be savages or civilized?

You may think that such instincts can only occur in degenerates, in inferior or savage creatures, or whatever other epithet we like to give to those we consider different from ourselves? Undeceive yourselves. We white people can show many examples of cannibalism that would doubtless put to shame certain savages with whom I am acquainted. Remember for instance the most pitiful example I know: the story of the raft of the *Méduse*. I select this example because I myself have been able to live through such tragic hours, perhaps even more tragic, for I have felt myself dying of hunger at sea, whereas those fellows were only afraid of dying of hunger.

After the wreck of the frigate on the banks of Arquín, along the coasts of Senegal, a portion of the crew took refuge on an immense raft (extremely badly constructed by the way). The raft drifted away; they had put aboard provisions, water. Only three or four days later, that mob which was afraid to die, began to kill; some were afraid of drowning and flung themselves into the water, to the delight of the sharks; others who were afraid of dying of hunger began to eat the raw flesh of their murdered fellow creatures! Now I have been nearly a month without eating. If I have never felt rising within myself the desire to kill my good friend Tati in order to carve a beef-steak out of him (and on a later occasion he has told me that that idea had not occurred to him either), there is one thought which we have both confessed to having had: it was that if either of us had died, we would not have flung all the meat to the sharks, we would have become cannibals. I even remember that, later on, on recovering my senses in the

hospital of Molokai, and seeing the rosy and plump cheeks of a little Chinese doctor leaning over me, I felt once more that a "civilized man" could in certain cases have the temptations of a cannibal.

Now, on a lonely island in the Pacific, the population sometimes grows to such proportions that the community no longer succeeds in feeding itself decently; then appears the spectre of disease and of famine. Would anyone be surprised that at such times the worst animal tendencies reappear in man, be he of brown, yellow, black or white race? There were no more "savages" at Futuna than there were on the *Méduse* raft, than there were in the course of certain Polar and other expeditions. Men have not yet all learned to die, there are still some (the majority I think) who are afraid to die, and the instinct to live at all costs within their bodies is still for them the only instinct that dictates their conduct.

What proves in the most vivid manner that cannibalism at Futuna was not a custom specially reserved for "savages" is the fact that people lived there for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years without knowing that custom. According to the very exact researches carried out by the early missionaries, it was only towards 1800, under King Veliteki, that the practice was introduced. How? Quite naturally, for they did not wish to die in that corner of the Pacific. At that time Alofi had 1,500 inhabitants; Futuna 4,000 inhabitants. At the end of the cannibalistic period the two islands only mustered 850 inhabitants. (To-day, comforting spectacle, due rather to the beneficent influence of the missionaries who knew how to steer their "children" clear of the contacts of our civilization and of the unhealthy commerce which it represents, much more than to the few wretched medicines which are parsimoniously dealt out to them, the population has risen to 2,000).



This population, reduced from 5,500 inhabitants in 1800, is, if not an excuse, at least an explanation for the introduction of cannibalism.

At that time a cyclone passed over Futuna and Alofi: everything was razed to the ground; the plantations of taro were wiped out, the coconut trees uprooted. Famine falls upon these islands, already over-populated. What happens? Doubtless they begin by eating the dead. Then they become accustomed to eating the dead . . . they want to live. Shortly afterwards, giving evidence of civilized intelligence, they make war upon one another: they eat the slain, and then comes the orgy; men are now nothing but beasts!

The immediate predecessor of the king who decreed the death of Father Chanel, was the most famous of the man-eaters. Doubtless he owed it to himself, being the king, to do things royally, and upon His Majesty's table were seen as many as fourteen corpses neatly roasted; (to be sure, he shared them in the most noble fashion with the gentlemen of his court and their families).

King Nuiliki, his successor, understanding probably that on such a diet, his subjects would tend to disappear (and that with them the advantages of his royal attributes would disappear too) decreed the abolition of cannibalism.

An old man tries to make him reverse his decree, and tells him that he has just seen in a dream the great Fakavelikere himself, who said to him:

"Go and see your king, and tell him this is my will: I want to see my people revert to the food of the gods!"

And the king replies to the old man:

"I doubt neither thy dream nor the words which the great Fakavelikere transmits to me through thy lips: I shall obey, and, in order to celebrate that return to the

ancient customs, thou shalt be the first whom I shall put upon the spit."

At that time, Alofi dropped from 1,500 inhabitants to 50; Futuna, from 4,000, was reduced to 800. It was time!

Now the following remark is important.

We agree to recognize as a savage that first king who let cannibalism be established in his island; do not let us even grant him the extenuating circumstances of famine. But then, what name shall we give to that other king, his immediate successor—same race, same blood, same education, who decreed its abolition? And all this, note well, without the advice of a "civilized man," without the least pressure from outside? Would it not be wise to conclude from it that human nature is the same everywhere? There are "civilized men" among savages, and savages among civilized men.

It is in these islands, geographically situated on the edge of what it has been agreed to call Melanesia and Polynesia, that people have often thought that they had found the solution to the mystery: What is the origin of the Polynesian race? What were their migration routes?

Futuna, owing to its situation and its isolation, ought more than any other island to help penetrate the mystery. Unfortunately only a fairly recent study was made of it, very conscientious, carried out as scientifically as possible, but (on the confession of the missionary who had been living there for 50 years), inaccurate in many important points; this being due, as in many inquiries of like nature, to the amiable facility possessed by the natives who are questioned, for sensing what they ought to say in order to please!

Futuna deserves to be studied anew, for there are

many mysteries to be cleared up on that island; the fact for instance that one finds in the customs and the physical characteristics of its natives as many Polynesian features as Melanesian, whereas their language is pure Polynesian (akin to Samoa, whereas that of the neighbours on Wallis is akin to Tonga).

One of the characteristics of the natives of the island (which proves a knowledge of life which many might endeavour to acquire) is that, knowing money and its uses, they know how not to become its slaves. Here, thanks to the missionaries who protect them as much as possible from all contact with undesirable visitors, they have preserved that mentality which so surprised Ellis of the London Missionary Society when he first came into contact with the natives of Tahiti. When that missionary sought to teach them that work was blessed by Heaven (especially when it was done to the advantage of its representatives on Earth), when he endeavoured to persuade them that its representatives on Earth came to them in order to reward them immediately with pretty calicoes in glowing colours, and a thousand gadgets manufactured in England, the natives had replied:

"All these things you are showing us, all these new things . . . of course we would love to have them! But, you tell us that in order to obtain them, we must work for you. We do not like this much! We prefer to do without the beautiful things you are showing us and to do no more than we are accustomed to do: the taro, bread-fruit trees, coconuts, everything that the gods have given us grows without our taking too much trouble; fish in the lagoon is plentiful, and we like to enjoy the pleasure of fishing there. Why do you wish us to spoil our lives with useless work, since it will only procure for us things which we can very well do without?"

The missionary concluded that they were unpleasant, lazy creatures, whereas they were merely wise ones. If all the people who, nowadays, understand that if useful work is noble, useless work is ridiculous, if for instance the devotees of what is called sport who, in order to keep in good condition or to improve their figures, propel balls large or small with hands or feet, employed this same strength in planting potatoes and in taking them up, they might perhaps be a little more useful to the community. Is it not somewhat ridiculous to decree useless work to be noble and grand, because we are not wise enough or intelligent enough to organize ourselves for useful work?

The true science of material life consists, I believe, in following the example of those Tahitians of former days: to find means of working as little as possible, the while seeking the means, by that minimum of work, to procure the maximum of the healthiest possible life. Had they not reached that difficult goal, those "savages" of the Pacific, with their apparent indolence, their laziness, so often decried, and their marvellous bodies, strangely supple and muscular—with their so-called wretchedness but with their hearts ever joyful?

The Futunians have to this day preserved the wisdom of their ancestors: doubtless they have allowed themselves to be tempted by light calico, by scented soaps, by bottles of perfume, by tobacco and by all the things which they can only get through the trader in exchange for money? But they limit their desires to these only. For example: the islands of Futuna and Alofi, merely with the coconut palms that grow and seed themselves pretty well everywhere, could quite easily produce 1,500–2,000 tons of copra: the natives have realized that by gathering only 600 tons, they have sufficient funds to treat themselves to their little luxuries. Then,

what do they do? They do not gather any more. What remains falls to the foot of the coconut trees. Oh yes, to be sure, people have tried to make them work more: just think of it, 1,000 Frs. a ton at that time: they just laughed! For 600 tons are quite sufficient to procure, for a whole year, tobacco, a few bottles of perfume (for the men, these), a few spare rolls of calico for their fair ladies—in view of the great social event of each week, Sunday Mass.

For Sunday Mass at Futuna is an event. Every Friday all work comes to a stop: the families scattered in the two islands leave their temporary straw huts and return gaily to their villages, Sigave, on the western coast, Alo on the south coast. The whole of Saturday is taken up with the preparation for the next day's festival: washing of linen, a general clean-up of the cabins, garlands of leaves and flowers for church decoration, and above all the preparation of the hair. Hairdressing is the convergent point of all the manifestations of Futunian coquetry: you will meet on Saturday the smart men and women with their hair plastered with white paste, a mixture based on white lime for scouring; then comes dyeing, ranging from a warm auburn red to light straw yellow; that red tint is obtained from a decoction of *ama* roots, a small local shrub, the yellow from sandalwood. A general view of the heads of the faithful at church is most surprising, for to the colour of the hair is to be added the unforeseen effects of the coiffures and of the make-up.

The coiffures have a very special cut: the height of beauty for a Futunian consists in having a head so shaped that the nape of the neck and the neck itself are in a line: this is called *ulupapa*. They obtain this result in infancy by compressing the cranium; (this practice of artificial deformation of the cranium has always been

wide-spread in certain regions of the Pacific, which caused false conclusions to be drawn from the measurements of scientists who were unaware of it and from the still falser classifications of types and races deduced therefrom. This custom of artificial deformation having been discovered later has yet changed nothing in the classifications obtained, many of which to this day serve as a basis for learned hypotheses).

The dye, made up into a sort of putty, keeps the hair in whatever shape you wish to give to it: the present fashion at Futuna seems to me to attempt an aggressive prolongation of the neck and of the nape of the neck towards the sky, with, at a right angle, starting from the forehead and running towards the temples, a division into points meticulously set in line. . . .

A few touches of rouge are added here and there, amidst the tattooing (which among women indicates that they are separated from their husbands and would not be sorry to find another one).

I regret that I no longer see the natives use that mode of decoration which was peculiar to their island, and consisted in dividing the face into four symmetrical squares: two black ones and two red ones!

I did not fail to attend Mass on the two Sundays of our stay. Everything proceeds with the greatest ceremony: the Paris Madeleine on a small scale. You may recognize there the beadle, the verger, except for their uniforms. I notice there what I have never noticed at the Madeleine, officials on sentry duty at each of the church doors. I learn later that they are ordered to keep a sharp eye upon late-comers and to report them to the king of the island, who, to show his displeasure, inflicts a penalty upon them. And what penalty?

For the political regime of the island is somewhat fanciful. In 1888, the Catholic missionaries made the

natives acknowledge our flag; an official protectorate was established. The kings of the villages of Sigave and of Alo retained their authority over their subjects. In 1917, the Resident at Wallis asked for annexation, but nothing was ratified. For, of their own accord, without waiting for a procedure which has doubtless remained pigeonholed in some corner of the Ministry, the natives, in agreement with their kings, paid their capitation fees (to-day 40 frs. a year). Futuna is therefore annexed without being annexed; good Father Haumonté, who for 50 years has been living in the island and represents the French Government, leaves the kings in peace; their subjects also leave their kings in peace, and the kings leave the old missionary and their subjects also in peace. In a word, at Futuna, everybody lives in peace. Is it possible that at the present day it is only savages who live in peace? Imagine 2,000 "civilized" living in an island; don't you think that the necessity of having a police force would soon make itself felt? Also a court of justice, a prison, or again some institutions for mutual help for the poor, public assistance, and what not, all those beautiful institutions necessary to those who imagine that they know how to live? Here, at Futuna, there is nothing of all this—confounded savages!

One day the Resident at Wallis, in order to give proof of his zeal and to show that he was looking after his distant dependency, desired to improve Futuna. He ordered the construction of a carriage road between the two villages: Father Haumonté, doubtless aware that carriage roads which are built across islands to improve the living conditions of the natives have often but one purpose—to serve the only motor-car, that of the Resident, and knowing that he, the Resident of Futuna, would never have a motor-car and that he would doubtless die without even having ever seen one (for people

had no cars when he left for the islands), nevertheless faithfully transmits the orders to the two kings of the island. And the good-natured kings consult their subjects: is not the track, which from all time had united the two villages, sufficient? To turn it into a road five metres wide requires a great deal of work, and useless work into the bargain, since the need to construct it is in no way felt; and, as I explained above, the natives of Futuna possess the wisdom of knowing how to avoid all useless fatigue. But the Resident had spoken, he had to be obeyed. It was up to the kings to organize forced labour! But how were they to organize that forced labour? Naturally out of those who transgressed the royal rules established in the island!

Would you believe it? The road waited years . . . for labourers! For out of those 2,000 human beings living like "savages", not one was ever found at fault! The road therefore looked like never being constructed, when the kings, wishing at all hazards to catch their subjects at fault, invented a new misdemeanour, a novel misdemeanour in an island under the republican protectorate of France. One day it was decreed that any native arriving late at Mass on Sunday should be punished with three days' labour "on the road".

And this explains (what is not to be found at the Madeleine) the presence of vergers at the doors of the churches, it explains also their use as well as their duty: they are appointed to recruit labourers for the road.

Mass is really the "great social event". The king, Te Tamole, appears there in all his dignity. The missionaries have doubtless understood that one never gains anything by wishing to destroy entirely the traditions of centuries by other teachings; Father Chanel's mistake has served: ever since Futuna has existed, its king has been regarded by his subjects as the expression of "God



Almighty"; would it not be imprudent and clumsy, on the part of a belated missionary, roughly to dethrone him and acquire the Divine connection for his own advantage? Of course the whole population has embraced Catholicism, but a little too quickly perhaps, if you come to think of it.

If the ancestral customs have bowed to the exigencies of the new religion, must not the new religion, in turn, bow to the exigencies of a tradition perhaps forsaken, often forgotten, but yet, in its essence, always present in the souls of the new converts; and that essence of all the traditions, is it not, will it not always be the same? It would be insulting the intelligence of the missionaries to think that their flocks are convinced of the real catholicity of their religion from the mere fact that they have accepted to follow the external manifestations of the worship.

Moreover, the teaching of men will never train men to understand, to know God, for God cannot be understood, cannot be known. He is felt; the intelligence of the most enlightened brain is nothing beside that internal vision which sometimes illumines the soul of the simplest creature. It is above all by the facility which a soul possesses to make itself pervious, to put itself in contact with the mysterious infinite that surrounds it and composes it, that man will be able to "feel" the divinity of what composes him and surrounds him. Now, let us make no mistake! Many human beings, whom the colour of their skin or the difference of their customs enable us easily to list as "savages," living more than we do in contact with nature and better aware of her, often have such communion with her that their souls possess more often than ours profound intuitions of what we are agreed to call God. Many missionaries, of the kind who could, out of a loving and comprehending

heart, respect the soul of these savages, could not help expressing to me their astonishment on this subject; so one must not be surprised to see some of these, only too rare unfortunately, endeavour to harmonize the traditions of their religion with the traditions of the religions of others, thus performing the greatest gesture of love and of human comprehension possible, a step towards the discovery of the lost one True Tradition.

But let us return to our king of Futuna: he shows by the elevated position bestowed on him by his chair and his dais that although somewhat fallen from his high divine prerogatives in the eyes of the new spiritual masters of the island, to his subjects kneeling around him he remains in the same privileged position.

I admire in him that natural dignity of a Polynesian chief, which astonished the first explorers of the Pacific: often when gazing at him on his poor chair, I imagine him seated on a magnificent throne. In a grave and sonorous voice, he leads the liturgical chants, recites the litanies, and, without flinching, flings himself into interminable prayers, to which all listen devotedly and respond with a pious unity. I admire too the discipline and the decency with which men, women and children approach the holy table at communion time. Yet I regret to notice that some of them, male and female, have preserved a little of that ridiculous feeling of modesty of which they had the good fortune to be unaware before the arrival of the missionaries, and which attracts public attention by too much calico around their brown bodies. At Futuna they have not arrived at that beautiful simplicity of the Catholic mission of Wanoni Bay, for instance, where I spent a happy month on the *Fou Po*; there, the faithful, whether in the chapel or in the forest or on the beaches, were not

ashamed to show their bodies to God as God had made them.

Just one comical note at which I apologize for having smiled in such a holy place: at the moment of the communion, I see the beadle advancing with slow steps towards the row of the kneeling faithful, and with his long cane, the insignia of authority, touch the shoulder of a half-naked old native. He wants to recall him to a feeling of decency: has not that good old man forgotten himself to the point of approaching the Sacraments with an imposing cigar butt stuck in the vast hole in his ear, barely extinguished, in its banana leaf! Everything is relative.

I have the pleasure and the honour of receiving King Te Tamole on board: he knows a few words of English, learned in the course of several visits to the Fijis, and a few words of French learned from the missionaries of the island. He explains to me why our arrival has made such an impression on his subjects: this double canoe is not a *vaka papalangi*, it is not a vulgar boat coming from the lands of foreigners, it can only come from Wallis or from Samoa, or again from a former enemy country, from Tonga. And our brown skins made them think that she was being steered by men of their own race; some of them even said that the descendants of their great ancestors were arriving, who one day, to escape the cook-shop of the cannibal king Vilitaki, fled from the village of Sigave, carried away by the east wind (this historic departure from Futuna has been found to be accurate: the refugees landed on the east side of an island south of the New Hebrides, to which they gave the name of Futuna, which it still bears).

It is then that I understand the excitement of the natives on the approach of the *Kaimiloa*. For if, for

many years, this nation of sailors and sea-adventurers has possessed no boats, I have felt in a thousand ways that there still live within it the love of the sea and the secret appeal of the distant horizons. Who will help them to become again what they once were, by an intelligent return to their ancient customs? Who will give back to them what they have lost in many of the islands, the joy of living? What were the reasons which made that nation of sailors abandon the sea, and that so quickly? For Father Haumonté, who has been living for fifty years in the island, says: "At the time of my arrival, each family still owned its outrigger, return voyages to Fiji were frequent. Many natives even arrived at Futuna coming from Wallis. To-day, as you see, the few rare little outriggers are no longer used even for fishing, at most do they serve to go to the island of Alofi, its very close neighbour, and to bring back a few sacks of copra, and even then they paddle back."

Yet I saw yesterday those descendants of a race of proud navigators using a leading wind. *Malheur!* They had hoisted all askew a bit of shapeless matting, and they used it without any art.

Why have the Futunians given up the sea? People looked for grand explanations of this, so complicated that they appeared learned; this craze for "classifying" which comes to us from Germany, which people insist upon using in order to simplify the unknown quantities of a problem by breaking them up, can also be traced in the studies of the Polynesian mystery. Misfortune will have it, alas! that the classification used is based in the majority of cases upon false conceptions, and only succeeds in making the problem more obscure.

Writers in the English tongue believed, for instance, in order to attempt a first elucidation, that they had discovered two general groups clearly defined, clearly

classified, which were to embrace all the races of the Pacific; food producers on the one hand (tillers of the soil and breeders of stock): and the food gatherers on the other hand, the wanderers, the travellers (those who live "on the country").

The most superficial study of the peoples of the Pacific enables us to regard as fanciful this first great classification of numerous and most diverse races into two species. The example of the Futunians, without going any further, suffices for the moment to demonstrate it; scarcely fifty years ago this population still lived principally from fishing and seafaring. Therefore these natives, sailors and travellers, should be catalogued as food gatherers without our scientists being in any way mistaken! Now what have these food gatherers become in the course of the last fifty years? Why, perfect food-producers! They have given up their boats, their voyages and their fishing, for fields of taro perfectly irrigated; they cultivate in terraces new vegetables unknown to their fathers, and practise the most intelligent irrigation: the sailor has become a peasant.

Without offence to the classifying scientists, they are none the less, to-day as fifty years ago, the same true Polynesians!

What then can have been the reason which caused them to change, in so short a time, their essential mode of existence? Here one could again put forward the most learned hypotheses: but is it not sufficient, in this case as in others, in order to find the explanation, to place oneself in the situation and under the skin of the Futunians at the two periods under consideration, then to let one's common sense speak?

The new "fact," the cause of all the Revolution, is the arrival of the whites in the island. We are the cause of this change of life, and (for once in a way) the involun-

tary cause! And we do not in this case deserve the slightest reproach. Have we not, from the time of the discovery of the Pacific, so much improved and enriched the agricultural wealth of certain islands, that a profound change could not fail to take place in the mode of life of its inhabitants?

Let it not be forgotten! Many of these islands were practically, before their discovery, for hundreds of years, without any communication with the outside world. When we came, their isolation was over: the numerous calls of whalers, the establishment of different missions, the commerce of traders, are elements the disturbing value of which is too often forgotten.

Whoever has travelled in the islands knows, for instance, the interest which the native attaches to the introduction of new plants and of anything which may in general contribute to the improvement or the variety of his material life; hence one can understand the beneficent rôle (from this point of view at any rate) which the schooners of old were enabled to play in the course of their numerous calls.

Hence how can we be surprised, when you consider the great fertility of an island like Futuna, to see the sailor transforming himself little by little into a peasant? Why should he take the trouble to go and look elsewhere for what he finds in abundance at home? Why should he go out fishing, when he can without difficulty have some *moas* (fowls) or *puakas* (pigs) around his cabin, when taro, yam or *kumara* (sweet potatoes) grow everywhere, and when, to vary his menu, it is enough for him to send his wife with a net to stroll on the reef that uncovers at low tide, and to have a nice little lot of fish to fry?

Is not that a very simple explanation, rendered still more final by this fact of observation: it is that wherever

fishing has ceased to be a necessity, wherever the earth has been fertile enough to produce an abundance and a variety of new foods, the Polynesian type, navigator and sailor, has gradually disappeared? It will be noticed on the other hand, that the canoe and together with it the spirit of the sea can now only be found on atolls without arable land, or upon islands whose soil is arid and poor.

Since I feel in the mood to smile somewhat at certain so-called scientific methods, which are to cast a light on the problem of the Pacific, I wish to speak of the dinner which H.M. Te Tamole of Sigave offered me, on his royal mat, and of the ethnological reflections which it suggested to me.

You know that in anthropology, it is also customary, in order to break up the human races, to use two other great "classifications"; the peoples who know pottery, and those who do not, it being well understood that those who have not yet been able to discover the art and the benefits of earthenware pots are by far inferior in civilization to the others . . . more "primitive."

Now the king of Futuna invites me to share his meal. At this feast there are not, as there would have been in those offered by his ancestors, a round dozen of human bodies neatly roasted, selected from among the best subjects (the best tasting, be it understood); but instead a score of women and a hundred piccaninnies: they surround the straw hut, as lookers-on only! The men, since it is Tuesday, have gone to "work" on the plantations in the interior of the island (tilling being work reserved for men, doubtless because Nature, being generous, enjoys doing most of it for them).

A soup is brought in, made of *lu* (young leaves of taro) cooked in coconut milk; in that soup have stewed a large quantity of delicious little red fish. The

soup is put upon the mat by H.M. the Queen herself. The crowd of lookers-on (it is the correct thing to do) disappears; the Queen alone remains, not as a guest, but as a servant, attentive to our slightest whims.

Now the soup was cooked *umu* fashion, that is to say in the Polynesian manner. That manner is well-known: in a hole dug in the soil you lay large stones which have previously been made white-hot; upon these burning stones you lay a bed of banana leaves, upon the leaves, the food to be cooked, separating each course by other layers of leaves; once the dinner is in the oven, you hide the lot under a thick and last layer of leaves, the latter being finally completely covered over with earth. The meal cooks *à l'étouffée*: it is difficult to imagine the excellence and the flavour of such cooking.

But what surprises me most is that the *lu* soup (a soup, mind you, of the quantity of two large family tureens), has also been cooked *à l'umu*, and that in a plain and wide banana leaf, adroitly folded, reinforced with bread-fruit leaves, the whole thing tied together at its upper part by little lashings of liana.

The soup tureen is unlashd: the Queen fetches two leaves from a neighbouring shrub, makes in each three little notches, folds them over adroitly, and hands them to us. The leaves have become little cups—perfect spoons. The soup is delicious!

A small sucking pig soon comes to add its pink flesh, perfumed with herbs, upon another palm leaf by the side of the fish soup.

I am bound to say that numerous flies wish to give themselves the luxury of forestalling the King and his guest in the tasting. Numerous flies? I believe that all the flies in the island have arranged a rendezvous at the royal table, for soon the piglet disappears under their turbulent horde; seeing which, the Queen fetches a



fan and drives them away with an august and mighty gesture, without worrying in any way whether she is sending them to be drowned into the smoking soup.

But what a delicious little piglet!

At dessert, I venture to ask the King a preposterous question which, ever since the beginning of the meal, has been worrying me:

"Why," I ask him, "do you not use stock-pots to cook your soup, good stock-pots which the missionary uses, and which are sold at the trader's? Would not that be more convenient?"

He looks at me out of the corner of his mocking eye and replies:

"*Vaka Futuna!* (it is the fashion of Futuna). Some of us bought in times past those stock-pots which the trader sells, but they soon found out that the Futuna fashion was the best."

"How do you mean?"

"We prefer not to have either plates or pots or other things of the same kind which break. Banana leaves for everything: by way of table-cloth, dinner things, soup tureen; more leaves for spoons, and our fingers for forks. When our meal is over, well! We throw everything away, crockery and dinner service, we treat ourselves to a new service at every meal, and there is no need to wash up!"

I think of the classification of our "scientists" and I reflect: These Polynesians who have been classed, not without some contempt, amongst the races that don't know pottery, show a darned sight more intelligence than those who might have invented it; for even when they know it, they know how to do without it; the palm leaf was given to them by Heaven in profusion; have they not performed a greater act of civilization by discovering a means of using the gifts of Nature intelli-

gently, rather than by giving themselves useless trouble in manufacturing earthenware pots?

When I leave the King, I catch sight of the Queen emerging from her private apartments where, surrounded by her numerous family, she has just settled the fate of the *lu* soup and the sucking pig. She walks towards a little shelter, a dependency of the Palace; fowls and magnificent black pigs hustle to meet her; she throws them an armful of banana leaves: it is the crockery; pigs and hens devour it greedily.

The King says to me with the same knowing look:

"And upon these fragments of crockery, my children, when playing about, will never cut their feet!"

Once again I have understood, at Futuna, that the degree of "civilization" of a people is not always a function of the "fittings" which it uses!

I was about to weigh anchor without having visited the neighbouring island of Alofi, uninhabited nowadays. The motive which induced me to prolong my stay among the Futunians for a few days, for the sole purpose of making an excursion there, is strange enough to be related.

In the course of my farewell visit to Sigave mission, the Father related to me among other stories that a few days ago they had discovered a new grotto in the bush at Alofi. A native ventured there, using, as light was failing, an electric torch which he had bought at the trader's. He dropped his torch, and while groping for it in the dark laid his hand upon a queer object. It had the shape of his torch, but it was not his torch. When he returned to the light, he was surprised to see that he held in his hand a human bone, a tibia! That tibia seemed to him to be larger than usual: placing it alongside his own, in order to make a comparison, he was puzzled to notice that the bone was ten cm. too

long! The missionary added: "The native was a fairly tall man himself, well above the average, which makes me think that the tibia was really a strange tibia."

I jump for joy . . . prehistoric bones, a new *pithecanthropus* maybe, perhaps even the famous skeleton of the missing link, the trace of which people always hope to find in the most trivial molar unearthed!

Instantly I ask for exact data; a native is called in who, it appears, knows the site of the new grotto; I would like them to bring me the very man who found the bones; they start looking for him; unfortunately he is on tour on the other side of the island, but they will send someone to notify him: he will be here to-morrow.

Our friend Mr. May, the trader, is as enthusiastic as I am on hearing of this discovery. Immediately an expedition is organized for the next day: we shall spend *two days prowling about the island visiting the grotto*, carrying out exploration on the site of the discovery.

I do not sleep a wink that night.

We start at break of day, Mr. May, Tati, and three natives; I am disappointed at not seeing among these three natives the man who discovered the grotto and the tibias; but one of them, the one whom we saw yesterday, knows the spot. I make him talk: he says it was impossible for him to find his comrade: questioning him still further, I learn that it is not only a tibia that was discovered, there were also other bones, not far away, even a skull. . . . What did he do with all those bones? He threw them outside the cavern! Where? He doesn't know; the adventure appears to me to be becoming more obscure!

We land on the north-west coast of Alofi and after depositing our luggage in a cabin which used to serve as the parsonage for the little chapel, to-day abandoned, we set out.

Let the anthropologists of pre-history who may be reading these words calm their excitement, we do not discover a "Futuna Man" to compete with the "Java Man," but nothing prevents me from believing (on the contrary) that others, more favoured, will not have that joy, for my instinct tells me that this tibia story is no fable. . . . The natives, who are good Catholics, do not invent a fable of this kind for their missionary, and the missionary is himself persuaded of the good faith of his informer. But this fact remains: the natives, although good Catholics, have nevertheless preserved a superstitious belief in the magical powers of their ancestors, and consequently in the respect which is due to their remains. The foreigners immediately showed, on the announcement of the discovery of the bones, an inquisitiveness which the missionary had not had. What do they want to do with these *ivis* (bones)? Will not the spirits of the ancestors revenge themselves on those who have aided or abetted these foreign hands in their profanation?

Our guide makes us visit the island of mystery, with its fallen rocks, its strange coral pinnacles. Emerging from the bush, we force our way through the lianas which the trees of the forest weave between them. Our guide shows us all the grottoes of Alofi, marvellous grottoes, but already known to him and his folk. It is the latest discovery that interests us most, to see it, to visit it in detail; it is in its immediate neighbourhood that we wish to search.

We venture into every corner of the island, and at the most diverse altitudes we find eight magnificent grottoes, some of them of grandiose beauty. Wishing to penetrate more deeply into these underground passages, we can no longer advance, on account of the thousands of *peka peka* (little bats), flying bewildered, bewildering us even; on account also of the fact that our legs sink to the

knees into a fine humid dust which is nothing but the dung of all those little birds of shadow accumulated for centuries.

How I should love to rid these caverns of that thick mattress of manure in order to see what there is underneath, maybe vestiges of the humans who inhabited them formerly, of those humans with the long tibias? But where is the grotto, the grotto with the *ivis*?

It is only after many requests that we reach the mysterious grotto at the end of our two days' excursion. But is it truly the mysterious grotto? Its isolated position and its difficult approach might make us think it is: yet I am by no means convinced; to satisfy our consciences, we start some digging which our guides follow with polite interest. My friend May, who knows the mentality of the natives well, says to me after two hours of labour: "It is useless to look any longer; we shan't find anything. I had promised a fine reward to the man who would find for me a bone of sorts, but look at them: our search even seems to displease them!"

We both have the impression that we are not at the cavern of the tibias at all, and that even if we were there, the bones found must already have been piously collected, buried, and hidden far from all possible profanation, and that it will be the lot of others, of a missionary sufficiently inquisitive and above all sufficiently patient, to find out the truth without appearing to be looking for it.

Who will pierce the mystery of the "out-size" tibia of the island of Alofi?

One of the most picturesque figures of Futuna is undoubtedly the Rev. Father Haumonté, with his long white beard slightly stained with nicotine, who has been fifty years in the island, the man who has never seen a motor-car, upon whom devolve the most delicate and

diverse duties. He is the spiritual head of the island; the "Resident" or official representative of the tutelary protection of France, the tax collector, the customs officer, the public works engineer, and the Postmaster-General!

He has little to do in his quality as spiritual head and "Resident": for all the Futunians are perfect Catholics, and thereby, perfect observers of the laws, civil and religious; if they happen to infringe one of these, they do it with so much artlessness and simplicity, that the Father, who knows the weaknesses of human nature, and still more those of the Polynesian character, endeavours not to frown too heavily upon them. Should there occur a little native difference between them, he consults the king who settles it; and as I said above, it is not the organization of the police which is a great worry for either of them, for there are no police at Futuna; those 2,000 savages of Futuna know so well how to live socially!

The position of engineer of Public Works reverted as a right to this missionary, a builder of churches, for there is not a corner in Futuna where there does not rise a monument of shaped stones surmounted by a belfry, to the glory of the God of the Christians. You may count half a score of these, I believe! And not churches built in the native fashion, no! Churches of shaped stones, each one of the heavy blocks, shaped and carved by the Father's own hands. He tells me so, but when I visit in detail his beautiful church of the Alo mission, when I see those perfectly chiselled stones, those pillars with their artistically sculptured capitals, I believe that he is pulling my leg.

"No, no, I am not pulling your leg," he replies, pulling out of his beard a short pipe which he only removes on great occasions, "I have shaped them and carved

them all myself, shaped them with my carpenter's saw, and carved them with my pocket knife!"

This time I think he is exaggerating. Yet I must give in to proof: the Rev. Father Haumonté is not lying: he shows me, on the side of the hill, a quarry made of an agglomerate of coral formation (a formation very ancient or very recent, I could not tell) scarcely more resistant than would be fairly dry clay: "I blow up great blocks of it," he says to me, "which we saw up into squares, then we fashion them with a knife; after some six months' exposure to the sun, this malleable earth is transformed into hard stone; it only remains to place them one on the top of the other, to make a church!"

Once again I regretted not being a geologist, and I made up my mind to seize the first opportunity to become one. Would it not be possible to find, in this strange quality of stone, part of the explanation of the mystery of the gigantic statues of Easter Island, or of the sculptures or of the perfectly jointed cyclopean walls of the Incas who, we are told, had no tools of iron or of any metal hard enough for such work (which by the way is by no means proved)?

It seems to me that it is in the capacity of Postmaster-General that the good missionary has most to do; yet the Futunians have not many epistolary relations with the outer world; in spite of this, Father Haumonté spends several hours at each call of the mailboat, that is to say every four or six months, in cancelling stamps.

To be sure, Futuna is a lonely island in the Pacific, and the stamps, gathered from its correspondence alone, would indeed be very scarce. The missionary receives therefore by every mail numerous letters from collectors or stamp dealers, sending him Futuna stamps bought in Paris, to be cancelled by him!

He tells that one day there came to him from Paris a money order for a hundred francs together with a nice letter asking him to be good enough to send back a hundred francs' worth of cancelled stamps. He sent the stamps, and a year later (communications are rare in Futuna) he received a nasty letter:

"You have botched all my stamps with your beastly postmark!" was what it said in substance.

The Father lost his temper: "Send me back my stamps, you ill-mannered boor, and I will return you your money order."

Another year passed, when to the surprise of our Postmaster, one day the mail brought to the island numerous letters coming from the most unexpected places in the world: all of them begging him to be kind enough to send immediately "those Futuna stamps cancelled with his 'beastly' postmark, and above all with the ink which he uses made out of a decoction of avocado pear (*sic*) and of coconut oil!"

This is the explanation: his angry correspondent of two years ago, a smart man, dealing in stamps, had thought better of it; it had occurred to him to publish the news in an important philatelist review; there is only one place in the world where stamps are obliterated with such ink (and of which he has himself invented the fanciful composition) and stamp collectors of the entire world started fighting for the "botched" stamps of Father Haumonté.

There is much to be learned from certain missionaries who live their lives in what is often very close contact with the natives and the country, so much so that often the natives and the country have placed their imprint upon them. I have learned more from the simple and clear soul of Father Haumonté about the atmosphere of



Futuna than through the most scientifically prepared works of any officially trained anthropologist. For it would be a mistake to believe that a missionary busies himself only with winning the souls of the "heathen" to the felicities of the paradise of the Christians.

Among them may be found the most noted specialists in our secular science. Father Haumonté is not a scientist, but he has a scientist's inquiring mind. Father Haumonté, whose work as a stone-cutter predisposes him to a certain inquisitiveness regarding the mysterious geological formation of his island, tells me, to wind up a good lunch washed down by the pure wines of France, the last following anecdote concerning Alofi:

That mysterious island has always intrigued him very much: many a time he has prowled about in its bush. One day he was surprised while digging at a certain spot, to find at a depth of only a few metres, soil so hot that it was impossible to keep his hand on it. To satisfy his curiosity, he decided to send to Nouméa a few samples of Alofian earth, together with a small bottle of water coming from a hot spring that spurts a little way off, to have it analysed at an official laboratory.

He received the following reply:

"It appears from the samples which you have sent us, that your island is eminently volcanic, and that you and your mission must expect to blow up at any moment!"

But, he adds with his perfect serenity:

"Don't you think that those learned geologists sometimes make mistakes in their conclusions?"

I prudently avoid replying, for Father Haumonté, who has been fifty years in his island, is doubtless unaware of the recent "progress" of geology, especially that made in the chronology of terrestrial phenomena. Probably he has not gone beyond the geological "time" of the Bible, and is unaware of the fact that we have

suddenly jumped from the few thousands of years to which it was customary to trace back the creation of the "Earth," to the hundreds of millions of years generously allotted nowadays for its mere formation.

I am wrong: Father Haumonté has evidently heard of those hundreds of millions of years!

"In my humble opinion," he declares to me, "if we have hitherto misinterpreted the Scriptures, it may be that the scientists are also making a little mistake in the other direction, don't you think so?" And bursting into laughter, good young fresh laughter, he refills his coloured cutty with coarse black tobacco (his own crop) and concludes:

"If my learned correspondent from Nouméa, with his analyses of rocks and of hot Alofi spring water, who visualizes us as blowing up at any moment, is making a little error of calculation of the same type made by his colleagues concerning the date of the creation of the world, I still have a few million years before me to smoke a few good pipes in the midst of my good Futunians, haven't I?"

Yes, good Father Haumonté, I hope you have—for the sake of the Futunians!

## Chapter X

### FROM FUTUNA TO THE GREAT BARRIER

*Sunday, April 25th*

THE whole morning has been spent in saying good-bye, a task facilitated by the grand gathering at Sunday service; whilst some natives, under the direction of my friend the trader, Mr. May, place on board our new provision of water, replenish our stores (always based on rice and noodles) and a few spare bamboos for the sail. The most friendly animation reigns in the island; a few young Futunians, doubtless remembering the legends which their fathers had related to them, look with envious eyes upon our preparations for departure and ask to be allowed to come with us.

"Not this time! But one day perhaps . . ." I thought. If the gods grant that I should return one day to your islands, I shall give you back a taste for sea-faring.

On the calm water of the bay, scarcely wrinkled by the little breeze descending lazily from the valleys, the *Kaimiloa* leaves her anchorage. It is 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

Upon the hill that rises sheer from the sea, next to the girls' school, are the two Catholic sisters surrounded by all their children. They press around the flagstaff up which have just been hoisted the French colours. I focus my binoculars, for the sun is causing a multitude of bright and multicoloured spots to play upon that corner of the island, contrasting with the sombre forest background; they are the lasses of Futuna waving enormous pieces of calico as a sign of farewell. The *Kaimiloa's* ensign dips three times, and the breeze which

has just freshened makes it crack merrily in the sky. But, is it truly the breeze that makes it quiver thus? Could it not be the pride of saluting that other ensign yonder which, hoisted by the well-meaning nuns, protects that lost corner of land in the Pacific?

We are a fair way off, but an excellent pair of binoculars can make you see lots of things: I notice that all those young virgins have a charming and ingenuous way of displaying their enthusiasm: those who cannot grab a bit of cloth or a bit of bunting to wave, have merely unfastened the bit of bright stuff which usually hides a portion of their brown bodies!

The sisters do not seem to be unduly excited about this; moreover the danger must appear to them to be at an end now: is not the *Kaimiloa* ploughing her way towards the open sea? Is she not already little more than a dot upon the great ocean? I think of what the Mother Superior had told me three days after our arrival on the island: as I was pointing out my surprise at having met but few young female Futunians during my first two days, only to see many smile at me all along the tracks from the third day onwards, she answered with a shrewd smile:

"That is because we have a house in the mountain, and as soon as a boat is signalled on the horizon, quickly, in a few hours, all our children are packed off there. You never know who is going to land, do you? And our children are naturally so gay! We have had a few very unpleasant adventures with visitors formerly. So you see, we took the same precaution in your case. But," says she as if by way of apology, "we soon understood that we could trust you." And I had replied:

"I thank you, Sister, for your confidence in me, although you know, what you are saying is not very flattering. A man in general, and a Frenchman in par-

ticular, always likes to be considered somewhat dangerous in this connection."

A little moved in the waning light, I stare at that happy island which is sinking slowly in a haze of gold beneath the horizon; for Futuna will remain for me one of those rare corners of the earth, blessed by the gods, where simple-hearted men still know how to live in the spirit of the gods, that is to say in peace and harmony.

The *Kaimiloa* sails on towards the west, where before disappearing the sun has left long blood-red trails.

### *Sunday, April 25th*

It is Sunday again. We shall only cross the 180th degree to-morrow, but I prefer to change the date to-day. The Futunians, who have become such good Catholics, do not realize what they have lost by giving up the grand navigation of their ancestors: by sailing towards the west, they could treat themselves to the luxury of having the same day two days following, two Sunday Masses in one week! And by returning at once towards the east, to have one day less work in the week!

### *1st May*

Calm . . . the wind is doubtless taking its working orders from the French Trades Union Council: is not to-day Labour Day at home, if I remember rightly?

### *2nd May*

Light breaths from east-north-east to east-south-east, with every now and again short rain-squalls, just enough to give us a fresh and delicate caress. How pleasant it is to sail under fair winds! One of these days I shall demonstrate that with a love of the sea and a minimum of nautical sense, it is child's play to go around the great

world in a little boat; they will then take me for a leg-puller . . . and yet!

When we reach Sourabaya, the Cape, France, ignorant landmen or sailors who sometimes are quite as ignorant, will utter great cries of admiration and applaud our feat! They have been so stuffed-up with the courage of seafaring men, with the frailty of little boats, with the anger of the ocean. . . .

This afternoon (Lat.  $14^{\circ} 40' S.$ ; Long.  $173^{\circ} 48' E.$ ), I notice on the sea, athwart the horizon towards the north, a long yellow trail: I shape a course towards it, to find out: it is a line of some 30 metres in width, made up of a species of silt, 5 cm. thick in places, which my ignorance of marine biology prevents me from classifying. The breakers come to a stop along the whole length of it, leaving to leeward a long band of perfectly smooth water. This accumulation of oily matter traverses the whole ocean from one end to the other, running in a direction east-south-east, west-north-west: astronomical observations taken on either side of these lines show me that it marks with precision the limit of two almost contrary currents. I gather a little of that yellow aggregate in a glass, I look at it, I try to understand, and once more I despair at being nothing more than an ignoramus; if only I had a good microscope, it might enable me perhaps to make some observations, which, carefully recorded, would be of some value.

I enjoy being in this zone, and I follow a course parallel with it. I could have followed it all night, for the moon, reflected in the band of calm water that skirts it, is reflected there with clearness; but I give up: I have promised Tati not to waste any time in studying currents!

3rd May (Lat.  $14^{\circ} 45' S.$ ; Long.  $172^{\circ} 30' E.$ ).

Bands of migratory birds coming from the south recede towards the north! I am very annoyed, for not one of these companies deigns to change its course in the least in order to come and cast a glance at the *Kaimiloa*.

5th May (Lat.  $14^{\circ} 40' S.$ ; Long.  $169^{\circ} 30' E.$ ).

I am not sorry, as to that, to notice that our course is still being crossed by these bands of migratory birds, ever more numerous. I shall have to pass on these observations to the learned anthropologist of Honolulu, who attempted to explain to me the mystery of Polynesian maritime migrations by the flight of birds, themselves migrators! The canoes of legend found their way and the new islands to be discovered by following them . . . just like that! I am very much afraid that any canoe which, on the 3rd of May, had followed the first colonies, would not discover on her course the same land as the one which might have fallen into step, so to speak, with the colonies of to-day.

What are these birds? Where do they come from? Where are they going? None of these flights, varying from 10 to 30 maximum, has passed near enough to our ship to allow me to discover in them any characteristic feature which could enable me to classify them later on. Alone their method of flight deserves to be pointed out; they arrive from the south, taking a northerly course, flying with a great regularity of formation as if they were following the curves of an invisible switchback railway, hovering flush with the water, then rising half a score of metres obliquely into the wind by means of rapid wing strokes, only to drop again, volplaning to the surface.

Where do they come from? From somewhere in the south, doubtless driven away by the present winter; from New Zealand maybe? But where are they going? Yet another little problem to be solved. For the time being what I gather from it is, that those fool birds seem to me to be a darned sight more intelligent than many human beings: I mean those who continue to shiver with cold, to poison their lives and characters in bleak countries, merely because they have forged for themselves their own slave fetters, chains made of those heavy links which they call (in order to deceive themselves about their weight), habits, conventions, obligations.

### *6th May*

The last few days we have had a pleasant breeze from the east-south-east, with a beautiful clear sky; the weather has been gradually clouding over since last night; the weather always clouds over when I have to reconnoitre a landfall. One might say that the gods of the sea, by causing me a little anxiety (oh! very little!), delight in increasing tenfold the joy which I experience in making a good landfall.

Ever since yesterday I have been unable to shoot the sun, and we have been going at a great pace: by my reckoning we ought to land at break of day in the New Hebrides, to the north of Espiritu Santo Island. Luckily, the weather clears a little at nightfall, a few stars appear, and even the moon is kind enough to give me the privilege of being present at her rising.

When I come off watch at 3 o'clock in the morning, I say to Tati:

"There you are! I hand over to you a clear sky, all is well; we shall make land at daybreak."

When he wakes me at 8 o'clock in the morning, I



am surprised to hear the rain beating like shrapnel on the cabin roof.

"Is it raining?" I say.

"It is," he replies; "well! you've said it, it's never slackened ever since I took over the watch: half an hour after you left, the sky again became black as '*le derrière d'une négresse en deuil*,' and it's coming down like '*vache qui pisse*!' And what about the sea? An hour ago it was coming aboard on all sides, enough to frighten you!"

I have a presentiment! I leap on to the deck; I think of saying to my mate: "Why didn't you call me when you saw the weather spoiling again?" But I know beforehand what he would answer: "You are always in a bad temper when I wake you!" For the time being, we must attend to what is most pressing, this choppy, tortured sea, *breaking in from pretty well everywhere*, I well know what causes it—land! Land must be there, quite close!

The weather is ominous, clouds pour down all the rain of Heaven upon us, around us; we cannot see twenty yards ahead!

"Quick!" I shout to Tati, "Let's lie to!"

We lower the mainsail and the foresail, and I keep a course of safety, that is to say, we remain practically in the same spot, tossing in an uneven sea. Between squalls I endeavour to pierce the dirty grey horizon to the west, trying to discern there a line of a dirtier grey which would outline, in the uniform haze of sea and sky, the mass of the land which I feel to be quite near. The course makes us drift towards the north, parallel with the coast: elementary prudence; there are light shiftings of the wind which worry me: that also means that the land is very near. It would not be pleasant hitting it in such a sea.

And this lasts the whole morning, the whole afternoon.

Only at 4 o'clock in the afternoon the sky clears: a little corner of it opens up, and an anæmic sun breaks through.

I jump for my sextant, and take a few altitudes somehow; but the blurred edges of the sun and the confused horizon warn me not to put too much trust in them. Whilst I am working at my calculations, shut up in the cabin, still a bit worried by the abnormal motion of the ship, I call out between two entries in the table of logarithms:

"Oh! Tati! keep a good look-out to leeward, we must be at the entrance to the channel."

"Yes, I'm watching, don't worry."

A few minutes later he rushes to the cabin door:

"Land, Captain, land straight ahead!"

With one bound I am on the platform: a big black mass is outlined, high, on the horizon, forming an impressive cone against the greyness of the sky.

What is that land? According to my position, it can only be Meralau, a volcanic islet which the chart tells me attains the height of nearly 1,000 metres! The vision only lasts a few minutes, the sky darkens again, night falls more black. Was it indeed an island, after all? Judging from this land that I am in the most dangerous position of the archipelago, I carry on on a course of extreme safety: we shall lose 24 or 48 hours if need be, but I am not going to venture blindly into that labyrinth!

### *7th May*

The morning rises less dirty . . . it may allow itself that luxury, after all that rain which has been washing its ugly mug ever since last night! It is indeed Mera-

lau that we saw straight ahead. We rehoist sail; we carry on on our way!

We pass within two miles of an extremely picturesque island which the charts call "Ureparara." The Nautical Instructions call it Bligh's Island; it was doubtless discovered by Captain Bligh who, abandoned after the mutiny of the *Bounty*, steered towards the west in an ordinary lifeboat, with the members of his crew who had remained faithful, and reached Timor by way of Torres Strait.

It is an impressive extinct crater; part of its steep wall has collapsed towards the east and gives access to a roadstead. How pretty that roadstead looks; I have a mad desire to venture into it, to drop my anchor in that water that sleeps lazily at the very spot where once raged an inferno of boiling lava. But I must carry on. We must see France again.

As soon as we reach the west of the island, the sea begins again its unruly behaviour, the wind freshens and we have to lie to under the jib. A few miles ahead of us the road is barred from south to north by a dangerous barrier of islets and reefs called Torres Reef. We are not going to meddle with it!

#### 8th May

At break of day we rehoist sail. What a strange sea! But we are sailing with the wind on the quarter, and the *Kaimiloa* faces it marvellously. It is a magnificent spectacle, from which neither of us can tear himself away; we feel rising within us a more and more respectful admiration for the plucky little boat. Monstrous waves sometimes rise from abaft the beam, rushing towards us, their crests breaking with a roll of thunder. Each time we think that they are going to pass over us, submerge us. We cling firmly to the cabin . . . and hop! the

*Kaimiloa* raises her stern prettily, and the monsters pass by still roaring, leaving only a little spray on the platform.

"Much ado about nothing," I say to Tati each time this happens.

"If we saw that at the cinema," replies my mate, "it would give you the shivers, for sure!"

Yet one of these does submerge us before nightfall, and that at the very moment when the sea appeared to be about to go down. One of those waves, rather less impressive than the others, than hundreds of others, arrives upon us breaking no more savagely than the others. Without thinking, I shake my fist at it, in a ridiculous gesture of bravado, and I shout:

"Shut your ugly phiz, you bitch!"

I have barely flung my insult when the wave appears to swell beyond measure, breaks with a vicious noise and falls upon us, swamping the whole ship; had we not had the presence of mind to cling hard to anything that happened to be at hand, the *Kaimiloa* would have continued on her cruise without a crew.

"You ought not to have said that," is Tati's reproach, as he spits out the salt water which he has just swallowed; "you must never insult the sea."

#### *May 10th-11th-12th-13th*

What beautiful days! This is real sailing; nothing to do except to look at the sea and the sky; to feel in the isolation of great spaces the presence and the might of the infinite forces which surround and strengthen you.

#### *14th May*

A day of flat calm. We are Lat. 13° 35' S. and Long. 157° 30' E. Within the next few days we shall be seeing

again our coast of Papua, pass again in sight of that Prurari Delta where the *Fou Po* was for eight months the guest of cannibals; one of the pleasantest recollections of my cruise! The currents are very interesting to study in these regions. I think with some regret of those two mysterious islands, of which almost nothing is known, Bellona and Rennel, which are in principle dependencies of the Government of the British Solomons, but which, geologically, belong most probably to New Guinea and to the archipelago of the Louisiades; two islands that interest me very particularly, for if the revolutionary theory which I have formed of a maritime migration from east to west is correct, they can have been but a calling-place for the Polynesian navigators of ancient days. And when circumstances permit the study of the mysterious race that inhabits them, which owing to its complete isolation must have preserved characteristics that would be difficult to discover anywhere else, people will be surprised to find in the heart of Melanesia so many purely Polynesian features.

Ah! If I could but follow the call of my intuition! For a moment as we came from between Santa Cruz and the Banks Islands I had thought of passing between the Indispensable Reefs and Rennell, but I had not the courage. To see that island of mystery outlined on my horizon without being able to land there! Time is needed before you can risk contact with unknown natives, you must endeavour slowly to make yourself loved of them, to gain their confidence, if you wish to learn even a little about them: that would take weeks, months. And I have promised Tati that we should not delay. It was to avoid the temptation that I passed to the south of the Indispensable Reefs.

16th May

Life continues, regular and sweet. I have succeeded in interesting Tati in what he calls, not without some pride, his "mathematics." He seems to be taking to it. That gives me an excuse for working on my own, without his taking umbrage at it.

At nightfall, we practise Morse signalling with the electric torch for a few minutes. It is necessary to be sufficiently expert in case we should meet a steamer. That exercise over, we read the newspaper, and we learn thus what has been going on in the world and in France . . . a year ago: every day we have our newspaper; and (this is an advantage which is reserved only for navigators like ourselves), as this newspaper is called *Gringoire* and is a weekly, we have our weekly every day. I give thanks to that American doctor in Honolulu who handed over to me his collection of one year and a half.

At Honolulu I scarcely read newspapers, and American newspapers hardly trouble about all that is happening in France, except for changes in the Cabinet; each time the Americans imagine that we are in a state of revolution! Reading *Gringoire* every night we learn some very depressing news. Can it be true that in France people are no longer Frenchmen? Can it be true that one has lost the pride in the tricoloured flag? And we, who are behind the times, who are still proud of making it float worthily across the world. . . .

18th May

To-morrow if all goes well we shall pick up South Cape, the southern point of Papua. I shall have to manage somehow to clear up the mystery about currents which I happened on two years ago while cruising with the *Fou Po* in these regions.

Here, in the main, are the facts: if you look at certain

maps of the Pacific (not only those in atlases which are supposed to be detailed, but also the more serious ones, taken from the publications of the several hydrographic services), you will see, rising towards the Gulf of Papua, a principal branch of the great current commonly called "equatorial." What becomes of that enormous afflux of surface water in that cul-de-sac? Part of it is made to descend along the Great Barrier, but many make it continue on its way—right through Torres Strait towards the sea of Arafura! A minimum of hydrographic knowledge of this region of the Torres Strait gives anyone the right to consider this prolonged route of the Pacific equatorial current as being highly fanciful!

Careful studies carried out to the west of the famous Strait two years ago with the *Fou Po*, then to the east as far as the extreme point of the coast of Papua, demonstrated this to me clearly. I had noticed, to speak only of the east of the Strait, running along that coast, in place of a general north-west current, a general east-south-east current, that is to say one diametrically opposite! Somewhat surprised, I attributed this current (for I had not been able to rid myself of the generally accepted notion that surface marine currents are to a great extent a resultant of the prevailing winds), to the north-west monsoon, which, at the time of my crossing, had already been blowing for several months.

Returning to-day with the *Kaimiloa*, in the thick of the south-east monsoon, the question arises: am I going to find, with this new order of winds, that my current has disappeared and is this time replaced by another flow of surface waters, which, obeying the impulse given by the wind, will take the opposite direction?

19th-20th-21st May

It has been difficult . . . I have perhaps lost 48 hours

zigzagging, and told Tati a few lies, but now my mind is satisfied. With due respect to the clever designers of current charts, there always is, even during the south-east monsoon, a current bearing eastward, that is to say, not caring a jot for the prevailing winds. The life of oceans, one of whose exterior manifestations easiest to study would appear to be surface currents, is even more mysterious than one imagines. In any case, upon the coasts of Papua as in many other places of the Pacific, I have been able to ascertain that the importance which the "Physicists of the Globe" attach to the winds to explain the order of the great oceanic currents has been very largely exaggerated. A little closer contact with the sea will perhaps permit us one day to confess humbly that our science "knows" less than it thinks it knows, and that many of its "explanations" have nothing final about them except the authority with which it is pleased to assert them.

### *22nd May*

We are approaching the Great Barrier!

Tati said to me yesterday:

"I shall say a prayer to St. Anne when we have done with all these reefs. This Strait of Torres puts me in a blue funk!"

He certainly has good reason for being a little apprehensive; he knows that I have no chart of this dangerous region.

It was only after leaving Honolulu that I made up my mind, after calling at Futuna, to shape a course for the Great Barrier: my initial project had been to go round New Guinea by the north, to visit that interesting Polynesian atoll lost in Melanesia, Ongtong-Java, and above all to find again on our way my dear equatorial counter-current. But, in the early days of the



voyage, I realized that we must not delay, and decided for the north of Australia. I therefore possessed charts of the north of New-Guinea but none of the Torres Strait! I amused myself, in order to fill that gap a little, by preparing a plan of the principal reefs and islets of the Straits, according to the latitudes and longitudes given at the end of my table of logarithms for the principal points of the globe. From time to time Tati looks anxiously at my work: is he not aware that the good naval charts, *the most recent*, are still very inaccurate, and that navigation may at any moment become a puzzle? In order to give him confidence I assure him that I remember very well the passage which we took three years ago with the *Fou Po*; the real truth is that I have but a very vague recollection of it, the only real recollection that remains to me of it is that with the good charts which I then possessed I was very often in a blue funk!

We prowl about the north of the dangerous reefs off the west of the Great Barrier. We do not see them, but we feel them to be quite close.

The night is of exceptional clearness. With stars so brilliant and a horizon so clear, I cannot resist the luxury of spending a night in taking bearings from the stars, and the stars played up well when they were kind enough to reflect themselves in the blemished mirrors of my sextant.

### 23rd May

On coming off watch at 3 o'clock in the morning, we lower sail.

"Keep your eyes and ears open," I say to Tati, "we can only be a few miles away from the Great Barrier. Keep on a course drifting towards the east. We shall rehoist sail at daybreak!"

I stretch myself on my bunk, but I cannot close my eyes; I seem at times to catch something like a confused and distant murmur in the regular noise made by the waves beating against the hull close to my ear. Can it be the well-known booming of the swell coming in from the open sea, in its eternal assault upon the coral plateau, which it would like to overwhelm and only succeeds in strengthening?

At 6 o'clock in the morning, the day rises clear, but leaves in the west a milky horizon. We point west, straight for the dangerous Barrier! I make for a spot which, according to my position, should appear to us a little to port as the summit of an islet, Murray Island, which the "positions" of my table of logarithms indicate as being a few miles inside the breakers. We strain our eyes. . . . Nothing to be seen!

"Perhaps it's drifted away?" growls Tati a little slyly! "How can you expect to navigate with your chart of waste-paper . . . why, a cow would not recognize her calf in it!"

"Maybe this island has drifted away . . . for once in a way . . . but the breakers certainly haven't, look over there, two points to port!"

To be sure, I seem to see on the white horizon a line whiter still which shows up and disappears, lengthens and narrows, as the *Kaimiloa* rises or falls on the waves.

Tati climbs up the mast.

"There they are," he shouts at me, not without some emotion; "the breakers! They are blocking the whole sea ahead of us! There is land to port, that must be your Murray Island. . . ." The light haze which hitherto had been hiding it from us has indeed faded away as the sun rose higher.

"We shall have to find a way in . . . now! Is the sea breaking everywhere?"

"Everywhere, and you may well say that it is breaking. Behind the breakers the sea changes colour, it's quite green!"

I consult my "chart": I am somewhat impressed by its lack of information; I have indeed marked a passage which the list in my table of logarithms calls Flinders Entrance, about 20 miles to the north of Murray. The latitude and longitude of its extreme point are there indicated under the name of *sand cay* which means "sandbank." That thingummy ought to show up white!

It will doubtless enable me to pick it up, but not perhaps to risk going in. For I do not know what the currents will be like in this narrow passage, and also what I am going to find behind it, once I have ventured into that dangerous inner sea. My intention is to take the northern passage, the celebrated Bligh passage (really we are following his track all along our route); the one through which we came out at night three years ago with the *Fou Po*. Again something to remember!

Still up the mast, Tati signals to me the general direction of the breakers. We follow a parallel course. Presently he informs me that at one spot the sea appears to have an even, clear colour. I ponder:

"Could there be, there, a free passage? Would it not be prudent to enter that pass and to shape a course for Murray, abandoning the idea of Bligh Entrance?"

At Murray, we might perhaps find a chart, or else information on the course to take to find again the passage known to steamers.

In my turn I climb up the mast. Tati was right, the passage appears to be free. . . . About ship!

I point towards it, approaching at first with wind on the quarter in order to attack later this point of the Barrier close-hauled: prudence always demands that one should approach a dangerous coast which one wishes to

reconnoitre, close-hauled, in order to discover a possible road of escape with some wind in one's sails. We draw near; since the big swell from the open sea is not breaking at this spot, there must be sufficient water for the keels and the rudders of the *Kaimiloa*, or else the sea and the rocks have come to an understanding to play us a dirty trick. . . .

I bear away: our lot is cast! We shall enter the Great Barrier . . . over the reef. After all, nobody is compelled to take the same passages as other people. When Captain Cook discovered Australia, he must have sailed as we are sailing, by dead reckoning.

As we approach, the water changes rapidly from the dark blue of the ocean to a light sky-blue, then suddenly it is patched with broad green slabs. . . .

And Tati, still up the mast, passes on his observations to me:

"There are two sharks which have been following us for half an hour! We are beginning to see the bottom. . . . A big black patch to starboard . . . greener water to port. . . ." The *Kaimiloa* forges ahead; we are about to pass the Barrier. I am scared for a moment. I can see the bottom quite plainly: a fall of black rocks stuck in the middle of luminous patches of white sand. Will anything foul our long rudders as we pass over?

The two sharks enter the passage with us; the swell from the open sea humps itself up two or three times more and disappears. We are now sailing on limpid water, bright green. The Great Barrier has been crossed: the murmur of the sea is now singing a different tune along the hull, and the *Kaimiloa*, very proud of herself, hastens at a great speed towards Murray Island, she wants to get there before nightfall; she thinks: It is not wise to play too much with Fate, nor with water!

Towards 3 o'clock, Tati points out long breakers slightly to starboard, then others to port; there is a trail of green water leading towards the anchorage; we enter it, with our eyes wide open. Heaven be thanked, the road is really free.

The volcanic ridges of little Murray Island are growing bigger; we are surprised to find this peak standing like a sentry on the edge of that Great Barrier, on the frontier of that inner sea.

We approach with prudence, but nevertheless carrying full sail, for the sun will soon be setting. We must be quick: the water does not appear to be preparing any surprises for us. . . . Some hundred metres from the shore, a few huts of leaves are outlined under the shade of the coconut trees: some excitement is beginning to show on the beach; bright spots, red, yellow and blue, are going up and down, running along the shore: the *lava-lavas* of the natives!

The breeze drops . . . a sounding: 30 metres . . . you can see the bottom . . . 10 metres.

"Stand by to anchor," I shout to Tati.

Then immediately:

"Drop anchor! Drop anchor!!!"

Too late . . . and Tati considers it useless to drop his anchor in 15 cm. of water. I pay out the mainsail, push the tiller over to leeward and we ground on the starboard side: the bottom suddenly comes up flush; fortunately we had lost speed . . . we pull the rudder up a little. There is no harm done, and we move away a trifle. This time the anchor drops, gets fast. We have arrived!

A small boat detaches herself from the bank; there are two white men aboard and four natives.

She approaches, the whites are consulting together, pointing to the ensign! No doubt they have difficulty

in explaining the presence of the three colours of France on a boat of such exotic appearance.

"Who are you? Where do you come from?" asks one of the white men rather roughly.

"Frenchmen! And we have come from Honolulu!"

"Honolulu, where's that?"

I am happy to see that it is not the French alone who are ignorant of geography.

"Over there, in the Pacific!"

He smiles:

"Well, you did give us a fright, we thought at first that you were a Japanese sampan!"

One realizes that the scandal of these Japanese sampans is still rife in these parts . . . three years ago the talk was all of their exploits; my good Australian has certainly never seen one of their so-called sampans, for he could not have mistaken it. The boats which the Japanese use in these regions to plunder the banks of pearl oysters, and above all of the trochus (following at the same time the definite instructions of their Government to improve the charts of the British or Australian Admiralty) are not constructed at all like the *Kaimiloa*. They ought to know that there is only one boat like the *Kaimiloa* on the seas of the world, and that the *Kaimiloa* herself. The said Japanese sampans are stout fishing boats, the outline of which differs but little from that of a boat from our parts. They are, moreover, boats without elegance or nobility, propelled, not with beautiful sails, but with a powerful Diesel motor.

"I have been looking at you through my telescope for the last hour," continues our questioner. "Afterwards as you drew near, I took you for a Papuan catamaran from Port Moresby."

He certainly cannot have seen a Papuan catamaran either.

"But," he adds, "what *are* you anyway?"

"You can see for yourself! Neither Japanese, nor Papuan, just two plain Frenchmen; two strange Frenchmen, I grant you, navigating in a still stranger boat. But that is a long story!"

"Come aboard!"

Five minutes later, we are the best friends in the world. We are forced to accept an invitation to dinner.

And while their boat is helping us to trip the anchor in order to find a safer anchorage nearer the land, we have to think about making ourselves presentable, shaving, looking for a pair of trousers, a shirt.

How complicated life becomes suddenly in the islands as soon as you meet "civilized" people!

## Chapter XI

### CROSSING THE GREAT BARRIER

24th May

WE weigh anchor at 8.30. Murray Island leaves with us very pleasant memories, but I feel, on hoisting the sails, that we are starting on a new adventure: I have been unable to obtain the slightest accurate information concerning the dangerous passages. Tati is uneasy: this time with some reason; but others before us discovered a way all right in this maze without more charts than we have, Torres, for instance, or Cook!

"We are chaps after Captain Cook's style," I say to him in a bantering tone, "we are venturing into the unknown!"

"What you say now is not very comforting," he replies, "for I remember that two days ago you told me that when he discovered the Great Barrier, Cook had flung his boat upon a rock, and that in order to float her he had been forced to jettison all his cannon and a great part of his stores, and that it was only because a block of coral had fitted into the tear in his hull that his crew managed to fight the leak and keep his tub afloat long enough to enable him to find an anchorage on the coast of Australia."

Maybe we shall not have the same luck!

Somewhat vexed at having chosen my excuse so ill by comparing ourselves to Captain Cook, whose adventures I had related, instead of Torres, for instance,



who must have had adventures, too—which I could not have related since I did not know them—I add:

“He managed somehow all the same, eh? We shall perhaps also manage if we get in a jam. It won’t be the first time, will it?”

But I was unable to learn anything at Murray. Our friend the White Man, a professor and the representative of the Australian Government in the island, after a dinner eaten *en famille*, sent yesterday for a native who has the reputation of knowing the channels. All I could get out of him was that as soon as we weighed anchor we should have to point to the north-west, and that once we had cleared the first reefs around the island, I should see the channel to port.

The rest of the explanation was most obscure. At a given moment, five or six miles further on, I should find myself facing a line of reefs, straight ahead, where the sea is always breaking furiously (that was cheering); it is at this spot that the passage makes an elbow: from the top of the mast, I would surely make it out. I tried hard to get him to draw a plan of sorts, but I soon perceived that if he did possess a vague idea of orientation when sailing in the maze of reefs of the Great Barrier, he had none whatever of drawing his pencil across a piece of paper.

Ah, well, we are off. Our fate lies before us. We shall keep our eyes open: we shall do our best.

At first, everything seems to go perfectly: a pleasant little breeze is blowing from the south-east and Tati, from the top of the mast, informs me that we are going down through a broad channel which appears to stretch beyond the horizon. I call up to him:

“Can you see the famous breakers of which the native spoke and which, within the next few miles, are to block our course?”

"No!" he shouts.

"Well, come down for a moment, there are fish leaping about around our boat, we are going to let out a line."

Three minutes later, an enormous kingfish is aboard.

"Do you think I have time to clean it?" asks Tati.

"Why, yes, go ahead, I will keep a look-out forward," and I let the line out again.

We are going at a great pace, the wind is now blowing fresh. With growing anxiety, I see the passage gradually becoming narrower. I have to luff to avoid a sneaking projection, where the sea is showing nasty eddies.

"Leave your fish alone, Tati, we will finish cleaning it later; a look around from the top of the mast seems desirable."

My mate climbs again, and whilst he is climbing another kingfish is caught on the line. I haul it in, but, so as not to clutter up the platform, I leave it on the hook with a few metres of tow astern: it struggles, but it is well hooked; gradually, with its mouth open, it drowns. I have the impression that I have just committed a crime: why prolong the martyrdom of that fish? Why even have paid out the line when the first fish was more than we needed; we shall have to throw more than three-quarters of it overboard. It seems to me that whilst this fish is in its death throes, the line of breakers is gradually drawing nearer to us, narrowing down our passage; it seems to me also that the fish, dragged along in our wake, is casting the evil eye upon me.

Presently Tati shouts from the top of the mast:

"There are reefs dead ahead!"

"Can you see a channel?"

"No, nothing . . . there are reefs everywhere, it's breaking everywhere!"

We draw near. . . . It is noon: we have been sailing since 9 o'clock; we have been doing an average of five knots over the bottom; that makes fifteen miles: whatever may be the speed of the currents, these reefs do not correspond at all with those which the native described last night, four or five miles away from Murray.

Where are we? I haven't the faintest idea! Certainly not in the right passage!

In my turn I climb up the mast. For once in a way I understand Tati's fright, we are face to face with an unpleasant cul-de-sac! Beyond the starboard reef, here a few miles wide, I think I see a line of deep blue water parallel with the horizon; that is where the passage must be. The one we have taken is perhaps also a passage, but a passage that leads to disaster!

The reef that surrounds us is scattered with brighter patches; upon these patches there is evidently enough water for us, but I also see some ugly black edges where waves are breaking savagely, which means the breaking up of the *Kaimiloo* into little pieces.

I notice a little corner of this wild fringe where the sea is not breaking; behind it, in relatively calm water, a very narrow passage obstructed only by some wide grey patches . . . disquieting, these!

Ah, well, it is no good hesitating; to carry on is impossible: to anchor in the midst of these breakers and with such a sea, or to attempt to clear ourselves by beating, is to tempt the Devil! Let us try to cross the reef: if by any chance we fail to do so, we shall drop anchor on one of those clear patches where the water seems calmer; the tide is ebbing; to hit anything, to run aground at high water, is not desirable; before or after, is hardly any better, but then there remains one hope: you have time to look around and to make preparations for refloating at the next tide.

My mind is made up. I am going to thread my way through these few metres of water which are not breaking on the reef; and when once on the reef, we shall see . . . over there, where the sea looks smooth.

It is at such moments that one feels all the joys, all the little shudders provided by the noble game of sailing.

The operation is carried out with precision:

Keeping on enough canvas to be able to manœuvre and to make for the exact spot, in spite of a strong cross-current whose rate of flow must be estimated in a few seconds, the *Kaimiloa* enters the reef. A glance at the bottom, as we pass, is impressive; there is no more than two and a half metres of water. In front of us, the sea is dotted with black patches of ill omen.

Presently I yell to Tati:

"Lower everything, lower the foresail, the mainsail, any old how, quick; keep only the jib!"

In less than a minute all the sails are down on the deck.

"Keep a good look-out forward, I am staying on at the tiller!"

And I think to myself: "If we touch, we shan't break anything, for we shall have very little speed. The rudder will touch first and it is big enough to stand a little shock!"

At that very moment Tati calls out to me:

"A rock dead ahead!"

And a few seconds later I feel, through the tiller, the rudder rising: even when you are expecting it, the impression is unpleasant.

I yell:

"We are touching! Let go the anchor! Let go the anchor!"

Down goes the anchor . . . curse that rock! But for it, a few metres further on we should have reached a broad

patch of blue water, where we would have had six to ten metres of bottom; for the time being, we are stranded. Thank God, the belt of breakers, which we left some hundred metres behind us, is protecting us. We are in smooth water.

We hoist up the rudders: the *Kaimiloa* pivots a little, then remains motionless. There is no doubt about it: we are aground. There is nothing to be done, the tide is going down; let it go down! We shall decide what to do when the tide comes up again. Meanwhile we are going to prepare for another little anchoring in that corner of blue water a few metres away.

At 2.30 in the afternoon the starboard boat is completely high and dry: her keel is resting on the top of the rock; as for the port boat, she is out of plumb, and is afloat some six inches deeper than she usually is.

A nice time my platform is having! We check the joining, and the springs, this time compressed home. I am tempted to say to Tati: "When I think that in Honolulu, the gentlemen from the naval yards predicted a smash-up after a few green seas . . ." but I hold my tongue.

We are wasting no time: we pay out some hundred metres of chain towards the little corner of blue water; we drop an anchor in the very middle of it; when the sea refloats us we shall be able to warp ourselves out there; and when we get there, we shall see. . . . At any rate, once we are anchored over there, we shall not risk inflicting upon the *Kaimiloa's* keel another foul contact with the big black rocks at the next low tide.

At 4.30 in the afternoon, we float; at 5 o'clock, we are anchored in our little corner of blue water; safe—temporarily.

We decide to spend the night in this anchorage, and only to start off again to-morrow after having marked

all the heads of rocks that emerge at low tide so as to pick out an exit channel: this plateau of coral upon which we find ourselves is about a mile and a half wide. Beyond it is the belt of healthy water which we have marked from the top of the mast, which probably is the pass frequented by pearl and trochus fishermen; for some hours I have been noticing the masts of a lugger at anchor there.

The weather is pleasant and clear, the wind is blowing fresh, but the sea, stopped by the wall of the reef which surrounds us, is calm. Tati dives in to see if we have not suffered too much from our grounding. He has become a grand swimmer since our Honolulu days; to kill time, he amuses himself by remaining under water as long as possible and asks me to count the minutes, believing he is going to beat a record: to his great disgust, I only manage to count the seconds. He brings me good news: the hull has not suffered in any way; only, under the keel, a little corner of the copper sheeting, scarcely the breadth of two hands, has been ripped off by the coral head.

God grant that this be the only souvenir which the *Kaimiloa* will have of her crossing of the Great Barrier!

Ever since noon I have been watching with my binoculars the masts of that lugger anchored on the other side of the reef, to get some idea of the currents running at her anchorage, and so be able either to avoid them or else to make use of them to-morrow, when we are where she is. By the way, I would give a great deal at the present moment to be where she is!

Whilst I am observing her, I notice little black dots coming and going in the midst of other black dots which are motionless, and which are the heads of rocks uncovering on the reef. Presently three of these little

black dots get bigger, and are working towards us: they are the boats of the lugger, fishing, looking for the famous "bêche-de-mer." They are more than three miles away; could they be coming towards us? I hardly dare to hope so; to cover such a distance with oars, in the midst of these currents, appears to me to be a super-human feat. Yet I have to yield to the evidence of the endurance of these natives; towards 5.30, without having ceased for one second to pull hard on their oars, there they are, looking at us with curiosity. We ask them to come aboard, but they dare not, so afraid are they of dirtying our boat; their brown bodies are covered with sticky filaments of bêche-de-mer, which are spread about, black, flaccid and disgusting, at the bottom of the dinghies.

A curious encounter; among these fishermen is one of our friends of the *Fou Po*, whom we met three years ago at Coconut Island. He welcomes us with effusion; at that time he had received us in his own house, being then a great personage in the island; he fulfilled the duties of schoolmaster!

He explains to me that the lugger on which he is sailing was yesterday at the anchorage of the little island south of Murray: that he had heard there of the passage of two Frenchmen in a boat—a queer boat—and he had suspected that it was we who had returned.

A native of Malaya, who is talking with Tati, informs me that our ex-schoolmaster knows the reefs well; immediately I make him climb aboard. I question him. He answers me, gives me muddled explanations. I ask him to draw a little plan for me on a sheet of paper, and I immediately realize the reason why he lost his post as educator of youth at Coconut Island: he can hardly write, still less draw!

Yet he seems to know his "Great Barrier." Perhaps we might trust him to help us get out of here.

After a great distribution of tobacco and biscuits, the opening of several tins of food, the three boats are lashed to the stern of the *Kaimiloa*; the half-score of Papuan, Malayan and Polynesian bodies which equip them, fling themselves into the water, rid themselves there of the viscous filaments which defile them, and take possession of my ship. My ex-schoolmaster then explains to me that, on leaving Murray, I took the worst possible passage, the most dangerous one, in which lugger captains venture only with great prudence, even at neap tides, for the currents are very violent there. How are we to get out of here? The only solution is to cross the reef at high water and anchor four miles away, at the spot where the lugger is now.

Hearing that their captain intends to weigh anchor at break of day, and that he has a chart of the Great Barrier, it occurs to me, since the sea is still rising, to weigh anchor at once, with all this crew aboard; to allow myself to drift with the flood current, with no sails up, then to hoist sail, and once the reef is cleared and we are in the channel, to anchor this very night near the lugger. The ex-schoolmaster shall be our pilot.

Our friend's first act is a supremely wise one. He sends two of his pals to sound above the rocks, which a while ago were rearing their ugly black heads, to find out how much water there is above them now. A little over three feet, they signal to him!

Perfect! As the *Kaimiloa* only draws three feet, with this current which is running alongside at over three knots, we shall not take long to get out of our unpleasant position.

With the greatest enthusiasm, my chance crew trip the anchor, leaving aside for the moment the big packet of tobacco out of which all of them have been rolling cigarette upon cigarette ever since their arrival.



The *Kaimiloo*, set free, is drifting at a fine pace, but inelegantly, carried along broadside by the current; our chance crew, knowing that there won't be any work for them until the reef is crossed, dash back to the big packet of tobacco; they are almost on the point of fighting in order to know which of them will roll the biggest cigarette, when, suddenly, a formidable crash flings them on to the other side of the platform.

I let out an oath! We have just hit a head of rock broadside on! Tati looks at me, scared: this one at any rate has less than three feet of water on top, he says. I give the "pilot" a nasty look. Tati, giving a lead, dives overboard, the natives follow him: they manage to make the boat pivot, she clears the rock, starts off again with the current, and stops after a fresh shock upon another head of rock. Same manœuvre, followed by the same shocks. We are making a survey of rock-heads of less than three feet clearance, with the hull of the *Kaimiloo*. One of the shocks is followed by a sinister cracking sound. This time it isn't the hull that has hit, but the rudder-rake. A shiver runs down my back, night is approaching . . . how can we gauge the damage? A native dives in and informs me that all is well: God grant it may be so!

Night has now come. I had relied upon the moon to light us, but the sky has suddenly clouded over. What are we to do? We are in the hands of the schoolmaster, perhaps he doesn't know much, yet he knows more than we do!

"We are clear," he says to me presently in his pidgin-English, "you may hoist sail!"

As a matter of fact, for the last few minutes the *Kaimiloo* has been drifting without hitting anything on the way.

Up go jib, foresail, and a little of the mainsail only, for

the wind is fresh, whilst with the help of Tati I lower the rudders. One remains lashed. I take one of the tillers.

We are going at a great pace.

My pilot shouts to me:

"You can carry on now towards the lugger." A shower of fine rain falls upon us; the lugger's anchor-lights disappear, I steer by the breeze: I know that I am keeping the right course for the lugger, provided the wind does not change during the shower. I shout downwind to Tati to keep a good look-out ahead for the light, I yell to my pilot to ask him if we are going right. Tati replies that he is watching; the "pilot" does not say a word. I see him, preoccupied, climbing upon the starboard boat, jumping on to the port boat, looking over the side, ahead, up in the sky. I have an impression that he has lost his sense of direction.

Several times I yell at him:

"Are we going right?"

Still the fool doesn't answer.

Suddenly I feel the rudder rising in my hands . . . mercy! we are touching, damn it! . . . we are touching! . . . that fool who says nothing. This time, it is the end: we are doing five or six knots; if the main-piece of the rudder catches on a head of rock at this speed, we shall rip off the whole stern of the boat! Disaster is upon us!

At the cry: We are touching! Tati rushes for the schoolmaster.

"Answer, blast you! Answer, blast you! We are touching! We are on a reef, which side are we to steer?"

The rudder rises still more: we are scraping the bottom, disaster is imminent.

The pilot, whom Tati has seized by the shoulders and is shaking furiously, begins to stammer:

"The lugger light, there, ahead, quick, go by the right!"

Tati calls out to me, repeating:

"We can see the lugger light straight ahead, we must go by the right; quick! Starboard! Starboard!" He rushes to help me work the tiller.

At that moment, the moon passing between two clouds lights up the sea. . . . Horror! I see, under its wan rays, that we are sailing over a bottom of black and white patches. We are still on the reef!

"By the right! Go to the right!" howls my school-master more furiously.

There is no doubt about it; he thinks we have left the first reef, crossed the channel, and are on the reef opposite. . . .

Go to the right! Suddenly these words hurt me . . . I cannot tell why, but I "know" that my pilot is mistaken; I "feel" that he is mistaken. I must not go to the right, but to the left; the reef on which we are sailing, which is perhaps about to wrench off our rudders and the sterns of our two hulls, is the one on which we were, which we have not yet left.

And whilst he shouts to me in a voice getting more and more scared:

"To the right! quick, go to the right!" I set my back against the tiller, and bear round . . . to the left!

Whence comes this certainty, this intuition which makes me act as if mechanically, and averts the disaster? The *Kaimiloa* must go to the left, I feel it so forcibly that I seem to be receiving a command which I cannot but carry out.

Soon the moon shows up the white patches and the black patches of the bottom a little more confused . . .

then, suddenly, nothing more; we have just got out of the reef, we are in the channel . . . saved!

Shall I insult my schoolmaster-pilot? No! I have something better to do: I give thanks to the mysterious forces of Nature who is sometimes pleased to favour those who try to live in contact with her and to conform humbly to her moods.

Half an hour later, with a freshening wind, but with the mainsail this time hoisted taut, after a few tacks made in gusts of rain, we drop anchor at the edge of the reef a few metres away from the lugger.

I leap into a boat and call upon the captain. That man is a sailor: he knows his Great Barrier; decent native that he is, he receives me in his little cabin where, seated on the floor, one's head almost touches the deck beams.

We smoke a few cigarettes and he shows me his chart (which he never uses), adds to it reefs which are not marked on it, minimizes the importance of others which are marked, and shows me the most convenient route to take in order to emerge from this maze. I leave with his corrected chart, and spend half the night in making a copy of it. To-morrow a native will come at break of day to take it back from me; we shall weigh anchor together, and we shall part company a few miles further to the north. For him, more reefs with the sticky *bêche-de-mer*, for me, more reefs with their ugly breakers!

### *25th May*

At daybreak, up anchor: a strong breeze is blowing from east-south-east. My friend, the native captain of the lugger, ups his anchor at the same time as we do. I am not sorry to leave this anchorage . . . what a dance it led us all night!

A few miles further north, our friend leaves us, forging his way between two reefs that stretch to the south-east of Darnley Island, and we continue alone on our adventure.

Tati, who, yesterday, at the moment of grounding, of the getting afloat, and of our dangerous night navigation over rocks that played tricks with our rudder, had preserved all his calm, is to-day extremely nervy; evidently, the copy of the chart which I made of the reefs to be crossed can have a meaning only for me; he confesses to me that it hardly inspires him with any more confidence than that other chart for the landfall of the Great Barrier!

He insists upon clinging to the top of his mast where it is not particularly comfortable, whereas a circular glance every ten minutes would be quite sufficient.

"On deck," he confesses to me, "I can't contain myself!"

That would be all very well if, from the top of his perch, he did not signal the breakers and their nasty appearance with a scared voice . . . which ends by impressing me. He sees breakers everywhere, which is true, but he also sees us already in little pieces on those breakers, which is not yet true!

Several times I leave the tiller to examine the landscape for myself; obviously it is not attractive, but as I point out to Tati, seeing that all these nasty breakers agree with the indications on the chart, there is no valid reason for not venturing amongst them, and in venturing amongst them, it is important that we should do so with confidence! Let us be all the calmer since the sea is the rougher. He looks at me with staring eyes, as if I were a devil. . . .

At 5 o'clock in the evening, the horizon clears a little; we manage to anchor at the north-west point of Yorke

Island, a little low island covered with coconut trees.

What a restful sensation: we pass suddenly from a short sea, through which we were carving our way in a smoke of spray, to a zone suddenly calm, protected by the islet. Convenient little gusts enable us to approach the coast cautiously, and in the clear water to spot good holding ground.

What a joy it is to drop anchor knowing that in this sheltered anchorage we shall be able to spend a good night!

*26th May*

We weigh anchor in a radiant dawn. Everything is rosy! We stand in for Coconut Island, where I intend to stop. I have a pleasant recollection of Coconut Island. The schoolmaster will no longer be there (but why the devil didn't he stay there always?) and that old Frenchman called Garnier, known to the natives only as Didon, is dead; but that other old man who did us the honour of his little island, who one evening escorted the whole of the feminine youth aboard, and invited us at night, under the coconut trees, to marvellous dances organized by the crew of a passing lugger, surely that man will recognize us.

We pass near enough to touch a small uninhabited island four miles to the north-east of Coconut. It is at this spot, if I remember rightly the story which the old man once told me, that Gerbault put in and that the following adventure happened to him.

That night, when our lonely sailor was fast asleep, his *Firecrest*, disgusted with the neighbourhood of land, dragged her anchor and made for the open sea.

At break of day, the natives of Coconut Island were intrigued by this boat which was not a lugger, had a mast of, to them, unusual height, and which was drifting

away. They followed her with their eyes for some time, then, seeing her carried away by the currents towards a barrier of dangerous reefs that cuts off the road to the west, leaped into a boat. As they drew near the *Firecrest*, they stared at one another in surprise: there was no one aboard.

Good catch, they thought! . . . and they boarded her.

But behold, there bounded out of the cabin a bronzed man, with his eyes still swollen with sleep, who shouted at them words in a foreign tongue: they did not understand him, but I strongly suspect that he said to them: "Well, what is it! Can't a fellow sleep quietly nowadays! And what the hell do you want here?"

Then opening wide his eyes, casting a glance around the horizon and no longer recognizing his anchorage of the night before, I again strongly suspect that he quickly added: "But, good Lord! what the hell am I doing here?"

Then guided by the good natives, he returned to his moorings at the good Coconut Island.

We too are approaching the good Coconut Island. A small native cutter is lying there; presently the crew appear moving about her deck: what can that strange ship be? A boat, manned by some handsome muscular devils, moves away from her and approaches us cautiously, paddling gently. . . .

One of the natives hails us:

"You? white men?"

We burst out laughing. The misunderstanding is permissible: doubtless the only whites they see land are Australians; we have nothing in common with them, neither pith helmet, nor soft straw hat, nor shirts, nor shorts!

Their question becomes more definite:

"You no Japanese?"

That is the limit! To be taken for Japanese! At that moment a whistle comes from the land. I stare, surprised: on the beach I see a man dressed in white, gesticulating. The boat leaves us quickly. He is the white chief of the island, they tell us.

A white chief at Coconut . . . the devil, the island is getting important!

"Tell the 'governor' that we are going to land in order to pay our respects! That we are two Frenchmen; that the natives will recognize us, as we put in here two or three years ago."

We land. The whole village is there. About fifty people; the kiddies have grown. Our friend, the "old man," almost falls into our arms: Didon's girls are still just as ready to laugh. They recognize us, they fête us.

The white man awaits us in his house.

"You frightened me," he confesses. "There, look, I had loaded my Colt. I thought I had seen one of those cursed Japanese sampans approaching!"

Upon my word, the sampan disease is still chronic in these regions. Here is another who has doubtless never seen a sampan. Taking the *Kaimiloa* for a Japanese sampan! What an insult!

The white man is understanding, he is at the same time the Governor of the island and the schoolmaster; doubtless a schoolmaster is always necessary in these islands—a titular one, at any rate, it sounds well: it looks as if there were a desire to raise the cultural level of the native. . . . Moreover, this is the Governor's birthday and his underlings have prepared a fête in his honour.

We are invited: a fête charming in its simplicity and its sincerity. There is a dinner to which we do honour. One of those little turtle stews!

We return to our ship at nightfall. The Governor



accompanies us. The natives (like those of Murray) are fascinated by our enormous taros from Futuna: we give them two, asking them to christen them *taro-Kaimiloa*. There is less likelihood of their cultivation being successful here than at Murray; but they can try!

We fall asleep to the sound of the tamtam; they are more civilized here than among our Papuan friends, the tamtams are not made of hollowed-out wood, artistically adorned with carvings, but of empty petrol tins. That doesn't matter: the joy is the same; we dance all night under the coconut trees. We sing under the moon.

Happy people!

We shall leave at daybreak; keep going!

### 28th May

If all goes well, we shall be out of the Great Barrier by to-night! No sooner had we cleared Coconut than the wind began to blow savagely. The sea has become hard, very hard, short breaking waves that hammer the hulls.

Tati, emerging from the windward boat, is pale.

"What is the matter with you?"

"You're going to smash everything up," he says, "carrying everything with this wind, this sea! If you were inside. . . . Just you go in, everything is cracking up in there, something will give way for sure! . . ."

Maybe he's right. I have an impression that I am driving the boat too hard this time. Especially close-hauled; at times the sea hits us like a battering ram, making everything quiver.

Yet I have got to hold on another hour. There is a reef to leeward which we cannot yet see, Campbell Reef; we have to round it: once it is rounded all will be clear!

Tati is up the mast (how does he manage to cling so

long up there!); he signals me a lugger to the east, south of the Harvey Rocks.

"Her mainsail is reefed right down . . . and we are still carrying everything!"

At that moment, a bamboo in the mainsail snaps.

"Let's lower sail!" shouts Tati. "Lower sail!"

"No, not yet! we must round that reef."

"Where is that reef?"

"Somewhere, over there!"

I go down into the cabin to put down a few bearings; a current is taking us westward, towards the reef, which we cannot see yet; seas are breaking everywhere. With this wind, this sea. . . . Soon from the deck I seem to see a trail on the water, whiter. . . .

"Over there, Tati, can't you see anything?"

He replies:

"No, nothing! It is breaking everywhere the same. Besides, I have had enough of it. I'm coming down; presently the mast will go overboard with me on it."

Down he comes, green!

It was the reef I saw from the deck, Tati sees it too, more clearly; we shall just manage to clear it—by two hundred metres at most.

At 1.45 p.m., we are abreast. . . .

"Cleared! Tati, cleared! We can shorten sail now. . . ."

He doesn't need telling twice.

"You told me that that cursed boat of yours was stout," he says once the operation is over. "Well, I believe you now."

Afar are outlined Mount Adolphus and the northern coast of Australia; to port, Wednesday and Goode Islands.

It is night when we pass under the lighthouse; behind Goode—little Thursday Island must be sleeping . . . the good little island. . . .

I pick up the electric torch and tackle the lighthouse keeper:

"We are the two Frenchmen who came to Thursday three years ago in a Chinese junk, the *Fou Po*. Give our greeting to Dr. Nemo, to the Mayor, to all those who so kindly welcomed us and helped us. We are making for Java!"

At 8.15 we round the lonely Booby lighthouse, we enter the sea of Arafura! Wind on the quarter.

When taking over the watch at 3 o'clock in the morning, Tati informs me:

"Now I shall be able to recite a fine prayer to St. Anne!"

## Chapter XII

### IDLING AROUND BALI

2nd June

OUR voyage continues, fair, very fair: there is nothing to do but let the boat run on: an average of 14.5 miles a day. Not so bad . . . and with the rudder lashed!

We have left those nasty yellow waters that edge the approach to Torres Strait in the west, and we are now navigating on a somewhat gayer sea: bright green.

What tacks we once made in this corner of the sea on the *Fou Po*!

It was in these regions that one night we just missed stranding on a big reef, sticking far out to sea from a point which the chart merely shows as a little sandbank: Turu Cay.

Wishing to clear up that mystery, as soon as we arrived at Thursday Island I examined the most recent British Admiralty charts and seeing no reef there, we hoisted our sails and retraced our steps. Not without a few adventures, we rediscovered the sandbank called Turu Cay, and the nasty-looking reef too.

What jolly days of study!

Once the *Fou Po* is anchored, we land on the bank and chart it; the unknown reef that surrounds it is of imposing dimensions: over two kilometres in length, a mere trifle! I take the opportunity of studying the tides in this corner, also the currents and bottoms. Presently I am surprised to discover an anomaly (which deserves to be studied in greater detail): within a distance

of only twenty miles, the tides show a difference both in time and in magnitude; Booby seems to be the extreme limit of two different flows, the one coming from the east (Gulf of Papua) through Torres Strait, the other from the west, from the Indian Ocean.

Then we have an adventure, an adventure that still sends shivers down our backs—retrospectively. Here it is:

Having finished our observation on the little sand-bank a few hundred metres long and upon the great unknown reef of two thousand metres, we return, at high water, to the *Fou Po* left all day abandoned at her anchorage on the edge of the reef. In any case, we could not have returned to her before, for, having landed at high water, the sea had, on ebbing, left our craft high and dry, far away on uncovered rocks.

We spend the night at the anchorage, we are not to weigh anchor until daybreak. It is 2 o'clock in the morning; I run through the notes and observations which I had taken during the day and I calculate the bearings with a view to checking the geographical position of the spot; it is then that I see, when my eyes happen to fall upon the compass near me, that the *Fou Po* is pivoting round: a reversal of tide currents, I think! But as I am busy making a diagram of the different currents observed at the anchorage, I find that the one that is making us pivot at that moment is quite unwarrantable. . . .

I poke my nose out; in the darkness, it seems to me that the white line of breakers is a little too clear. I run forward: one of the anchor ropes (we had no chains to our anchors in those days) is hanging straight down along the hull. I pull on it: there is no anchor at the end; I throw myself on the second rope . . . no anchor there either; the big cables, as a result of the numerous swing-

ings in the course of the day have got wound around corals . . . have been working . . . have been cut.

The *Fou Po*, carried away by the current, is making for the shore.

I yell like a lunatic:

"Tati! Quick! Tati! We have lost our anchors; we are going bang on to the rocks! Put some canvas up, quick!"

Thank Heaven, the foresail had not been furled; in a few seconds, it is hoisted.

It is time, high time. We are on the brink of disaster; only a few metres from us, that reef which we had just been studying slides past us.

There we were, at sea, saved but anchorless! In spite of all, we managed to anchor again at Thursday Island: a friend, Mr. Cleveland, warned by the lighthouse keeper at Goode, to whom we had signalled our strange situation, came to meet us in the roadstead and passed us an anchor aboard.

But that was not our greatest fright. Our greatest fright came when the reef was cleared and all danger was over, a delayed-action fright!

Suppose *Fou Po* had left her anchorage during the day, when we were on our sandbank with only a sextant, a chronometer and an artificial horizon! Suppose we had seen our boat at low tide giving us the slip, and been unable to do anything to catch her up! Or again, suppose the adventure had happened at night, when we were both asleep, what a shock on awakening! The *Fou Po* stranded on a rock and stove in by the sea. Even admitting that we had avoided getting drowned, to end our days drying up on the sand at Turu Cay! No doubt all they would have found of us a few years later would have been two skeletons properly cleaned up by the crabs and the sea-birds.

Brrr! What frights you can give yourself when you have a little imagination! To this day I feel a shiver down my back!

*8th June*

Nothing of importance. Still doing an average of 120 to 140 miles a day, and still with the rudder lashed.

I spend my time taking altitude after altitude. I want to confirm my idea, already verified many times, that this branch of the equatorial current, which the elaborate atlases make pass through Torres Strait (one wonders which way exactly) and continue its majestic course towards the Indian Ocean, exists only in the fancy of map designers.

Not a fish on the sea ever since we left the Straits! That's queer! When we came this way with the *Fou Po*, at about the same time of year, there was nothing but fish about! We were literally sailing through shoals of kingfish, shoals so thick that at night I used to amuse myself harpooning the water haphazard along the hull, and at every watch I used to bring aboard seven or eight. Several times even, with sharks interfering (sharks whose big eyes shone in the dark water like carbuncles), these kingfish, scared, leapt out in waves of hundreds at a time, splashing our deck with phosphorescent water, and, what some people will consider a "Marseille story," several forgot themselves on a certain night so far as to fall back on our deck.

*9th June*

Make a landfall at Scemba, to the west of Timor.

I always feel a very pleasant sensation in making a landfall. Because I see land again? Not a bit of it! But because I find it where it ought to be. The fact is, we have aboard the *Kaimiloa* a pretty rotten chronometer.

10th June

Calm, rain, variable breezes. Swinish weather with bad visibility. We are hardly moving.

12th June

We reach a queer line of tide rips. I follow it. I take altitudes with a view to studying the currents (I shall do my calculations to-night). This line of tide rips looks like following exactly the thousand-fathom line. Why?

14th June

Tati wakes me at daybreak.

"Flat calm," he says, "but just come and have a look at the coast; this looks a mighty pretty country!"

For the last two days we have seen nothing but ugly coastal indentations, shrouded in grey mist. Ever since we have been approaching land the sky has been heavy with clouds, only giving us glimpses, and those but scanty, of sombre lines of very low hills; this morning, in a well-washed sky, a line of peaks with outlines both clear and delicate is throwing up majestic cones coloured with rosy pastel tints.

We have plenty of leisure for admiring the landscape, for we are becalmed in the very middle of the bay, a few miles off the southern coast of Bali.

The sea, soon jealous of the splendour of the mountains, is pleased to adorn itself coquettishly with the lights of dawn. Fish are leaping out here and there, making in the motionless water circles that widen out as they quiver with colouring, as regular as on the placid waters of a lake. A jolly party of porpoises passes near us, in line abreast, going south: these congenial fish must surely feel within them the pleasant softness of this morning; they seem to be in good spirits, leaping sideways in a curious fashion, pirouetting round two or



three times before falling back inelegantly into the water with a big plop.

We are becalmed and drifting towards the south-west; gradually we are approaching that nasty Mebulu Point, which I had so much trouble in rounding last night. It is the ebb tide; to pass the time I amuse myself by making a small experiment, intended to check an observation which I made out at sea during the last few days when we made our landfall.

I pay out the so-called floating anchor and sink it to a depth of some 15 metres. What is my surprise when I see our drift arrested; the bows are brought round towards the north, and everything happens as if the tide current worked only on the surface, as if, under it, there existed a slight contrary current. Yet we are only over a depth of some 60 metres. . . .

How little we know about life in the oceans; I think of the valuable studies which sea-rovers like ourselves could carry out with a few instruments. . . .

This existence of bottom currents is, I think, of such importance, and so unsuspected, that I wish to mention here, as an instance, an observation which I often made in the Pacific, and which cannot but appear somewhat disturbing to many learned hydrographers.

The last observation was made on the 12th of June, between Lombok and Musa Besar. When making a landfall, I amuse myself (this is a little mania of mine) by making use of the rare soundings shown on the chart in order to get an approximate idea of the submarine relief over which I am sailing. Here the soundings, relatively numerous, make the tracing of contours easy. My curiosity is soon awakened, for on approaching the thousand-fathom line, I notice upon the sea that phenomenon well-known to mariners, called by the English "tide rips," and by ourselves *remous de courants de marées*;

this phenomenon caused by the meeting of two contrary currents produces on a sea that may sometimes be quite calm a superficial disturbance (this disturbance may, in certain regions, have the appearance of a very hard, short and breaking sea).

Now the *Kaimiloa*, taking advantage of the good leading wind, is pleased to follow this line of tide rips. Presently I notice with pleasure that I am sailing exactly along the thousand-fathom line by following the submarine contours of least curvature! Now, for a level line, at the bottom of the ocean, with nearly 2,000 metres of water on top of it, to be able to betray its presence on the surface with such exactness, must be because there exists at those depths a powerful displacement of the mass of submarine water, thrown out of its course and brought up again by the relief encountered, with such regularity that on meeting further displacements (which would be superficial, like tide currents) it gives rise to tide rips. The observation of this phenomenon could therefore, as in the case under notice, give an exact idea of the shape of the submarine surface.

Here (I shall certainly appear to be somewhat daring in my conclusions, for, owing to lack of instruments, I was not always able to verify them) I put forward the following hypothesis:

If a bottom current can thus enable us to discover on the surface the relief of a known submarine bottom, could not a serious study of the vagaries of surface currents, hitherto somewhat inexplicable in certain regions, reveal to us unsuspected reliefs on ocean bottoms, contours very different from those which we are accustomed, much too readily, to draw on certain charts (those of the Pacific in particular)?

In calculating the force and direction of certain currents in the Pacific, I have noted many mysterious

irregularities. And I have felt that if at the time of those observations I had had a sonic depth-finder, I should have found the explanation of the mystery below me. Ocean bottoms are less well known than we suppose, and life in their waters may quite well be different from what we imagine.

Towards the afternoon the merry school of porpoises returns from its outing to the open sea, still frolicking: they bring us a little puff which keeps company with them on the water. Presently the *Kaimiloa* ceases revolving; its languishing canvas shudders between the bamboos, and again the water sings softly alongside.

In our wake we leave behind a queer mass of objects that has been floating around us ever since this morning (a calm is a powerful stimulus for cleaning and setting a boat in order) . . . behind us disappear parcels of old newspapers, an empty case of condensed milk, a collection of empty paint pots, a few bits of clothing whose various tints are not too appetizing. Yet the breeze is still very anæmic; fearing to see it fail us without warning, I decide to anchor near land as quickly as possible.

At 5 o'clock we drop anchor opposite a friendly little village, with huts prettily arranged in a semi-circle facing the sea; it bears the name of Seseh; that is all we shall ever know of it; it is impossible to land there, for a long swell, sneaking into this hollow of the bay, is breaking with a wild roar.

A boat manned by two natives comes towards us . . . then moves away. We make signs to them; they do not reply. Perhaps they are scared by the Polynesian *tikis* painted on the hull? Or else the strange appearance of our double canoe: maybe it reminds them of the confused legends dealing with the incursions of the Polynesian devils of former days!

Our voyage will not end at Seseh, yet on this coast I

must get into communication with some native or other: I know nothing whatever of Bali, I do not even know where its principal harbour is! We shall grope about further away; at daybreak we shall leave this anchorage, in quest of another; perhaps we shall be luckier.

15th June

We sail along the coast, pointing west; a coast covered with rich pastures, dotted here and there with villages, having as a background the majestic line of the volcanic cones, but nothing very tempting by way of anchorage. Yet we must land somewhere; there are letters, letters dear to me awaiting me at Sourabaya. There must surely be a means of communication between all these villages on the southern coast of Bali, and Java. But, after all, why not go straight to Sourabaya? Why this idea of stopping at Bali, whereas on leaving Honolulu I had decided to call in only at Sourabaya?

Yet this evening we drop our anchor opposite a little village called Pengambangam and, as at Seseh, the natives seem to avoid us; not a boat pulls out from the shore! There is a little Malay *prau* anchored near us; there are people aboard, for the smoke of the wood stove on which the rice for the evening meal is cooking, is filtering through the roof made of woven reeds; but no one pokes a nose outside; they must be spying on us from inside!

That decides me. To the devil with the idea of a call on this southern coast of Bali; I had particularly wished to avoid sailing through the two straits, the one which separates Bali from Java (whose currents have an evil reputation), the other which separates Java from Sumatra (renowned for the famous Krakatoa and its unforeseen explosions). Never mind, let us make straight for Sourabaya! The two straits, well! They

will provide us with some interesting sailing! Let us hope that with the aid and the protection of the gods, it will be exempt from too many adventures!

*16th June*

We weigh anchor at daybreak. This time we are in grand company, for from every clump of trees along the coast there emerge native craft making for the straits like ourselves. Here every native seems to own his little boat; the craft which they use, more or less peculiar to these seas to the east of Java, is the double outrigger, very heavily canvased, with the triangular Malay sails so pretty to watch; this rig is smart-looking but must be rather awkward to manage.

At 4 o'clock in the evening, making our way up current, sailing past the trees on the western coast of Bali near enough to touch them, we enter the narrowest part of the straits; I look for a corner wherein to spend the night; it is important to see clearly before we venture further; a restful little bay presently opens out to starboard; my chart calls it Gili Manuk Bay.

I enter it. Upon a little wooden jetty, people have appeared making friendly signs to us. They are the first to do so since we have been sailing up this coast: instantly this particular corner gains in charm. As soon as we have anchored, furled our sails and made all shipshape, we launch the dinghy: it shall not be said that we did not set foot upon the poetic land of Bali!

In our sea-going outfit, that is to say wearing just enough to hide what it is customary to hide, we land. A young Dutchman with a smattering of English takes us to his uncle and aunt, "the only whites in the place," he informs us; doubtless he meant "the whitest," for the uncle is patently crossed with Malay, and the aunt is only just a little tinged with Dutch. They offer us a

cup of tea, prepared and served by the young daughter of the house (who, in her turn, to provide a fresh confirmation of the accuracy of Mendel's law, displays the sturdy build and rosy complexion of a blonde milkmaid of Amsterdam!).

We learn that Manuk Bay, in spite of its isolation, is a much-frequented spot. To be sure, it is here that some of the tourists who are visiting Java land, attracted by the vaunted charms of Bali. Every day a little motor-launch pushes off for that purpose from Banyuwangi on the opposite shore; these tourists are often preceded by their cars, which are brought over on the little Malay outriggers. This explains that dazzling "Dodge" that entered the roadsteads just now at the same time as we did; I had been amused by the sight of that glistening machine haughtily crushing the dainty little canoe, without a suspicion of the absurdity of its position; the contrast was striking, and by no means to the advantage of the "Dodge!" Elegant as were its lines, harmonious as was its coachwork, it had the appearance of a *nouveau riche*, loutish, a little ill at ease before the noble simplicity, the refinement of this delicate little boat, rigged with bamboos, gliding easily upon the sea under the mere pressure of her white sails!

Doubtless a motor-car is not intended to be seen on the sea! Nor is a delicate little outrigger intended to be seen on the road, yet those we see over there on the road, hauled up very high under the great coconut palms, do not appear in any way to jar with the harmony of the nature which surrounds them!

17th June

For some months past Tati has had a fixed idea: that of making me pancakes with eggs; he imagines, not without reason, that the result will be somewhat more

digestible. (Those he prepares for morning breakfast are in the main composed of flour mixed in seawater, to which he adds rather grudgingly a little condensed milk.) So he went ashore last night with a gold dollar to look up the "Chinaman"; for here as in the most remote corner of the Pacific is to be found a Chinaman sheltering behind a counter.

The Chinaman at Gili Manuk is not well acquainted with the rate of exchange (or maybe he is too well acquainted with it); he agrees to take the dollar, with a very wide margin of safety. And Tati returns, very proud, with five eggs! Those five eggs, bought from the Chinaman, will certainly appear doubly "very dear" to him.

In the store he meets a Malay who speaks English well and regularly crosses the strait in his outrigger. Tati takes advantage of this to ply him with questions and brings me some information concerning the hours of the tide and the local peculiarities of the ebb and flow.

To-day I question the skipper of the motor-launch on the same matter: the information is most contradictory! The man with the motor is the less encouraging of the two: he states that the current is always too strong to be completely counteracted by the tide, that it is always flowing down the straits, sometimes at a speed of five to six knots, and that consequently we shall always have it against us, but, he adds, "the wind is nearly always favourable, and you will be able to sail up it easily!"

What stupid things are said to you sometimes by those sailors who have ceased to be sailors, that is to say by those men whose marine sense, if ever they had any, has been atrophied, then killed by the trepidations of their motor engine! This good Malay skipper of a screw-launch must daily encounter the currents which he is traversing; but he deals with them too easily . . .

a little more or less of the tiller! He has probably never taken the trouble to calculate their usual trends and their vagaries.

I therefore put more faith in the tips given us by the man with the sailing-canoe, and I weigh anchor an hour before slack water (that is to say, with still some of the current against us, so as to be well placed when it reverses . . . if it ever does!). I am a little anxious; in spite of a fairly strong favourable wind, we cross to the opposite bank crabwise, losing nearly three miles to leeward. Could the motor man have been right and the sailing man wrong? I now have all sail set, doing a good four knots: am I going to find myself this evening still with all sails set and still doing a good four knots at the same spot as this morning . . . and if the wind fails me . . . where I was yesterday?

Gradually, I regain confidence (which really I had never lost); following the opposite coast of Java, gaining tree upon tree, one little outcrop of the coast after another, sometimes almost ashore, sometimes thrown out far away into the open sea, gaining a few metres then losing them again, we find ourselves at last in the narrowest part of the strait, less than a mile wide, when, suddenly, the current slackens, ceases to flow, and starts off, this time favourably!

You good motor-launch skipper, you lied through ignorance! Presently I notice that he has lied twice over, for the wind which he had assured me was always favourable to sailors sailing up the strait, fails us suddenly: the *Kaimiloa*, carried away only by the current, with her useless sails, no longer steering, is about to cross the strait without help. Another quarter of a mile and we shall be through! Alas, the current is pleased to throw us from the coast of Java to that of Bali and, pivoting in ridiculous fashion in violent eddies we are drawing



dangerously near to the low point of Pasir, where there rises a pylon surmounted by a light. The water under the keel shows up bright green, the bottom is revealing an ugly relief of pointed corals. Tati and I, armed with a long bamboo, sheer off, awaiting the first shock. I am about to drop anchor, for in spite of our efforts, we shall never manage to steer with a pole. I hesitate to anchor over such a disquieting bottom. When, feeling a light breath from over the hills, I haul in the sheet; I fall astern a few metres and attempt to pay off; the puff has come from the expected direction: we are in trim! The *Kaimiloa* pivots on her own axis, goes about while falling astern; her sail fills a little: and we narrowly avoid a nasty ugly sharp stone which has just loomed up to leeward! God be praised!

Once outside the strait we find a choppy, unpleasant sea, this being due to the meeting of currents and to a very uneven bottom: we have only a very light breeze, blowing in patches, to keep us from the land: we dance about during that unpleasant night more than ever we did when we were riding the heavy seas of the Pacific in high winds.

### 18th June

I am a little anxious as we draw near to Sourabaya. Not on account of the sea, nor because of the coasts of Java and Madura between which we are sailing, but because of the marine chart I am using, which professes to give accurate information about both.

This chart is No. 3001 of the "Hydrographic Service of the American Navy," purchased two days before we weighed anchor in Honolulu and said to be correct in accordance with the latest notices to mariners.

Anxious? Certainly, I am, for on the route leading to Sourabaya by the east, I read that, according to the

soundings, there cannot be depth for a steamer to pass, and that even the *Kaimiloa* if she were to find a somewhat rough sea there, might very well bump! Indeed the maximum depths are given as two fathoms! And yet I see a lightship there which the chart does not give and which seems to indicate the entrance to a pass which the chart does not give either.

My surprise is at its height when at nightfall we pass within hailing distance of the lightship: her crew greet us merrily; and when night has fallen I see her beam sweeping the sea, just as if it were intended to be of some use!

I thought: the Dutch are known throughout the world for the excellence of the lighting of their coasts, for the buoying of their channels, for the ease with which they dredge and fill in, ridding a channel of the mud and the sand that obstruct it, as easily as they fill in with mud and sand the seas which they covet, to turn them into fields of spuds. The Dutch have certainly not placed this lightship there just to puzzle navigators! Nor have they put her there merely to watch the passing of the thousand Malay craft which unceasingly move from the Java coast to that of Madura and which could do perfectly well without it.

Tati takes soundings: the depths are far greater than those indicated on the American chart. What does that mean? As we near Sourabaya, I see lights rising from all corners of the coast; the chart does not mention them! Again, what does that mean? Let's be prudent. Let's anchor. To-morrow at daybreak, we shall start off again.

At midnight a steamer passes within two hundred metres of us: surely that boat must have more than three metres of water under her keel to be able to navigate!

*Sunday*

Upped anchor at daybreak. Just as I expected! Straight ahead of us, a perfectly buoyed channel and with all due respect to Chart No. 3001, more than three metres of water all the way along!

To arrive under sail in an unknown harbour is exciting. You have to guess the contours, the reliefs, to anticipate the spot where you will have to anchor; you must in good time know how to make up your mind as to the course you are to follow in order to reach the selected spot at a favourable angle. Upon many uneven coasts you have to guess by numerous little details of observation whether the breeze will remain, when you draw near, in the same place as it is now, whether it has not some little tricks in store which may be of use to you.

Doubtless the place you have chosen from afar is not always the right one; if not for the anchor, at any rate for the authorities entrusted with the policing of the port. And so it is to-day for the *Kaimiloa*.

As we draw near, I mark out a nice little sheltered corner, but, as we get closer still, I notice that this little corner has the grave defect of being in the middle of a channel . . . and that this particular channel is that of the entrance to the naval harbour!

It is Sunday, and nothing is deader, administratively speaking, than a Dutch harbour on a Sunday.

Never mind, I anchor; we shall see! Somebody is sure to come and inspect this strange boat which, moreover, has had the strange idea of selecting a good anchorage in a forbidden area. It happens: half an hour later, from the wharf in the direction of the harbour (where up till now everybody appears to have been dozing), a motor-launch pushes off and makes for us; a Malay, clad in a uniform and wearing the round cap of Dutch officials, addresses us as he rolls friendly and

astonished eyes around him: we explain the facts to him in a few words, where we are coming from, where we are going, I break into hypocritical apologies for having selected this anchorage.

Immediately he points out another to us, some three hundred metres away. All right; I hand him a bit of tow-line; he has the good grace to accept it. One of the natives comes to help Tati pull up the anchor, and a few minutes later we find ourselves in the best anchorage in the whole harbour!

The launch leaves us; the offices are closed, everything is closed, even the office of our consul, where bundles of letters are awaiting me. I know, they contain "news" two months old! All the same, I feel vexed. And so to bed!

## Chapter XIII

### SOURABAYA AND THE STRAIT OF SUNDA

*Sourabaya, Monday*

I CALL upon the Harbour Master; I am visiting an official and I meet a congenial sailor; most amiably he inquires about the needs of the *Kaimiloa*. We want to haul up our boat high and dry for cleaning and inspecting the hulls, those hulls which toyed with coral points when we crossed the Great Barrier! Very well! He recommends at once a quiet corner and issues orders for the clearing of the space by the native boats that obstruct it.

We set to work as quickly as possible, for I feel that we must not remain long in this locality: once we have received and dispatched our letters, inspected rigging and hulls, applied one coat of paint outside, then straight-way up with the sails, lads! and off to sea again!

In fact, of what interest can this big town be to me? Probably a town like so many at home, in spite of its different geographical situation, a cosmopolitan town of merchants and tourists, with a population like that of so many others, composed of people who seriously imagine that they are placed at the navel of the universe, living only for the self-importance which they like to claim, for the money they earn, or would like to earn, and, to complete their charm, exercising that supreme politeness of civilized beings, which substitutes a smile for an insult.

The majority of the population, natives, is of that very mixed race which it is customary to designate under the

name of "Malay"; it ought to interest me more, seeing the important rôle which is still attributed to it nowadays in the solution of the Polynesian ethnological problem which I am studying: But others, better qualified than I, have, particularly during the last few years, scientifically studied the different racial characteristics of which it is composed; on reading their books, I shall store up their science in a few days, whereas they have spent whole lives in establishing it. The only remark that I can make about it, after meeting many Malays in sundry islands of Malaysia, is that anyone, content with very superficial observation, could say this: if Fornander, the acknowledged authority on Polynesian questions, whose theories to this day remain for many the only ones scientifically established, had in the course of his life met a few live specimens, he would certainly not have described to coming generations Malays as the indisputable ancestors of Polynesians.

Yet Sourabaya interested me keenly from the ethnological point of view, in that generally neglected branch of ethnology which might be called "nautical ethnology."

There is one characteristic common to Malays and Polynesians . . . to certain Malays at any rate: both are maritime peoples. The port of Sourabaya, with the river that joins the roadstead to the town, is but a picturesque coming and going of native sailing ships: two main types: the little coasting sailing vessel from the neighbouring Madura Island, and the big schooners from Macassar, which are to be met with, coasting almost everywhere, among the Dutch East Indies.

The Madura sailing ships, recognizable by their richly carved triangular stems and the care with which the most unimportant bit of wood is embellished with lively colouring, strike me particularly, for their hulls,

judging by their lines, seem to be a perfect replica of those of certain Chinese junks of the Fokien (unless the Fokien junks are a replica of these Malay *praus*?). At the same time their large triangular sails, imprisoned in long and supple frames of bamboo, recall by their shape and rigging, the sails on the boats of certain islands of the Melanesian Fidji and of a few Polynesian centres.

The Macassar schooners with their white hulls picked out with light green, have bulging shapes, a depressed forecastle whence points a bold bowsprit, a raised poop, which make them directly akin to the caravels of Columbus. They proclaim their true origin; they are the barely modified copies of the early Portuguese and Dutch navigators of the seventeenth century; in their case, the rigging and the sails have been modernized. One notes with surprise that these vessels of relatively large tonnage have by way of steering gear the two inconvenient and heavy sweeps of that period.

The skipper of one of the schooners, to whom I expressed my surprise that he did not equip his boat with an honest and practical central rudder, answered, puzzled:

"It is our custom!"

There was no replying to that. And, feeling doubtless the need of an explanation, he embarked on a long speech from which I was able to make out the following:

"The seaman entrusted with the handling of one of these sweeps is obliged to stand outside the boat, on the side, in a position of uncertain balance. If peradventure, at night he succumbs to sleep the result is instantaneous: he falls overboard! Thus the captain is absolutely sure of a good look-out on the part of his steersman, and he may, with mind at rest, sleep soundly."

The anecdote is not wanting in quaintness, but it explains nothing.

The reason for the tenacious preservation of this archaic apparatus will more likely be found in that psychological phenomenon observed among sailing folks, that force of habit against which nothing seems to prevail; and if by any chance a change of construction, of rigging, of working has to be made, the modification will be carried out with disconcerting slowness, if at all; for long years to come it will leave behind indisputable traces of its early origins!

This is a fact that cannot be ignored in historical ethnology.

And if the study of the different races permits me to combat without difficulty the established theory of a Malayan origin for the said Polynesians, the "maritime" study of the native craft (nautical ethnology) which are still to be found in the archipelago, will provide an additional argument for the theory which I am forming . . . of the opposite: the incursion, at a certain period, of a people of navigators coming from the east, which left in the Malay archipelago such evident traces of its passage, that one can deduce therefrom its usual routes of navigation, as well as its principal places of call.

But that is another story!

### *Monday*

I pay a visit to our consular agent, Mr. P. J. Bijlard, a congenial Dutchman.

He hands me my mail, and, having read it rudely in a corner of his office, I ask him for news of Europe. The perusal of the collection of *Gringoirs* from last year seemed to forecast coming cataclysms!

"France is still there," he says to me smiling. "Blum is overthrown, but he is in the new Cabinet; he is said to be allied to the Communists, and he is suspected of being up to some dirty work!"



I remained somewhat sceptical: that that man should have allied himself to the Communists is his own business, it's his *cuisine*! As to dirty work, I shall never accept that. It seems to me impossible that in Paris anyone should do any *cuisine* that is not good French!

The Consul kindly asks me if we need anything; putting aside all false pride, I confess to him that with the prospect of our coming passage into the cold seas of the Cape of Good Hope, it might be useful if he went through his wardrobe, and that if he happened to discover any old cast-off clothing, on the warm side, it would be welcome. The next day he sends me a big parcel, in which I find a smart half-season jersey and a few dainty "palm beach" suits, which as his note says "have shrunk too much for him," yet not enough . . . for they still just fit the measurements of big Tati. God! when shall I find in a port of call a well-dressed friend of my own size? He apologizes for having nothing warmer to offer me, and fills in the gap by adding to the palm beach a few good bottles of Burgundy; these at any rate will warm up our hearts!

I was about to leave Sourabaya without having found any trace of a Frenchman; but on landing for the second and last time (the town is several kilometres away from the harbour), I notice in the principal street a superb hair-dressing establishment, all glistening with plate glass . . . which reminds me of home.

"Suppose we go in just to see," I say to Tati. "After all we need a hair cut!"

"We might ask the price anyhow," growls my mate. "It must be expensive in there!"

We go in.

A lady assistant hurries to meet us.

"You are the 'Explorers,' aren't you? I recognize you; the day before yesterday your photo was in the

Sourabaya paper. The 'boss' was just thinking of going down to see you to-morrow morning."

They call in the "boss"; he seems as excited as if he had just discovered someone of his own family; he takes us home with him, to an elegant country house in the centre of the town, sheltered under tropical trees (hair-dressing seems to pay in Java); he introduces us to his wife, a charming lady and typically French; presently his wife introduces us to her brother, her brother to his wife. In a word, we land in the midst of a whole family, four *ménages* at least, all partners in the hair-dressing business.

That night we return aboard joyfully. We have met good folks from home, we have had a dainty dinner—from home too; but on climbing on to our platform, I remarked that we had not had our hair cut!

The next day the whole of that pleasant family comes aboard the *Kaimiloa* to say good-bye, bringing food and provisions of all kinds, including six bottles of old Burgundy.

When the time of departure arrives, the family land and group themselves some 200 metres further away, opposite the naval harbour: the *Kaimiloa* with all sail set passes within a few metres of their quay; then I hear a voice quivering with enthusiasm and dominating all the noises of the harbour, which shouts: "Long live France!"—it is that of the "boss," and the whole family takes up the chorus. The little group then visibly swells; officers from the Dutch navy, attracted by the cheering, come out of their bungalows with their wives and children and, doubtless carried away by the surroundings, mingle their greetings and their cheering with those of our friends.

"Long live France!"

"A nice send off!" says Tati.

The crossing of the strait is done in style: a following wind, a smooth sea, the sky a bright light. This time I have a chart, a real one, a Dutch chart brought up to date with the latest corrections. I amuse myself comparing it with that chart 3001 which I had used when coming in. The errors and omissions continue to be beyond belief: the two most powerful lighthouses in the channel for instance, those of Sembilangan and Piring, are not marked on the American chart! a rock which the latter places dangerously in the middle of the channel, is transformed into a lighted buoy, and its depths of 4 fathoms into a channel 20 metres deep.

How is it that the hydrographic services of the various countries do not combine to avoid such errors? They would thus simplify their work while rendering it more effective. Sailors have already given the finest example of international understanding, already having laws, regulations common to all, and above all a spirit common to all. Have you never noticed that a sailor can always make himself understood by another sailor: they may belong to different nations, but all the same they are of the same race; of course each has the pride of the navy of his own country, but each also understands the pride of the navy of the others.

Ah! if everybody on land possessed the maritime spirit! With a modicum of wisdom, of common sense and above all disinterested understanding, it would be possible to work so very much less for a greater output, and an infinitely smaller cost of production.

Let us take the particular instance of our charts and nautical instructions: every country has its own organization that publishes its own documents, of course making use of the information which various countries may supply, regarding the coasts that concern them. These compilations would therefore be accurate if all the

hydrographic services informed one another of any new observations and of any corrections made, each in its own domain. . . . Which, alas! is by no means the case. Each country therefore, has to bear the cost of a complete organization, which, not being, and unable to be, perfect, becomes a dangerous organization for such an important branch as navigation. Some publish admirable charts, which are marvels of engraving; others, charts that cost a good deal less, but which are too often badly printed with greasy ink and hard to read.

Why not have an international hydrographic service? Let its publications be issued in English, since all the sailors in the world understand that language! We have already adopted the meridian of Greenwich; perhaps if we gratified our maritime sister by adopting her language in this case, she would at last have the good grace to give in to us about her "fathoms," her "feet," her "Fahrenheit" and so many other measurements which at bottom must worry her as much as they worry us. Do not let the sale of nautical documents be in the hands of unscrupulous retailers, who care not a jot for "last notices to mariners," but let them be entrusted to official and responsible organizations (the navy, harbour offices, consulates, etc.). It is enough to see with what meticulous care the charts which I purchased from the harbour master at Sourabaya were brought up to date to make us hope that officials of other countries would act as conscientiously. We would no longer find, for instance, in the "English Instructions," that the port of Jaluit (under Japanese mandate) is the port of entry for Nauru Island, which is under the control of New Zealand. I would not advise even my greatest enemy to go to Jaluit in the Marshall Archipelago and ask there for a permit to call in at Nauru. He would be received by a nasty Japanese Governor, with a shaved

skull, then kept a prisoner, and accused by him of espionage, and perhaps would not have the luck to slip through his fingers as we did on the *Fou Po*.

### *Strait of Sunda. 1st July*

We sail along the north-west corner of Java: the coast of Sumatra is outlined ahead of us; sailing near enough to touch land, the *Kaimiloa*, in a dream sea and under a steady breeze, rounds St. Nicholas point, parades past every rock, every beach, every tree on the coast. What a rich and pretty country! I think of those good Dutchmen, far away in their low, cold and damp land, carrying on a titanic warfare just to win from the sea a few acres of land, spending their energy and their millions to fill in the *Zuider Zee*, whereas they possess here, in profusion, vast, rich, fertile, sunny kingdoms which in the main are unexploited. . . . If I were the Queen of Holland I would long ago have transferred my court to Java, and decreed Holland to be a colony.

The sun sets in a blaze of light, red and gold dance upon the sea: with sharp edges outlining their masses of deep violet, the mountains and islands of the strait have hooked to their summits little strips of pink cloud. Krakatoa, in the west, raises its cone half blown in by the latest eruption: it is difficult to believe that in a calm atmosphere such as this, the most disastrous convulsion of the earth's crust took place a few years ago.

### *Midnight*

I move from the deck to the cabin and from the cabin to the deck like a hunted animal. Each time I endeavour to stay outside a little longer, but there falls one of those impalpable mists which soaks me to the bone. Yet the night promised to be so fine; as soon as the sun set the atmosphere was charged with heavy coppery clouds;

soon nothing was to be seen: no gleam divided the sky from the sea. Ever since that moment blinding zigzag flashes of lightning have been carving up the darkness every few minutes, lighting up a flat, a too flat sea around us.

When the fine, close rain began to fall, the flashes were like great pale lights blurring everything: the mast and sails of the *Kaimiloa* show up as if through thick ground glass.

We must be somewhere in the neighbourhood of Krakatoa. The uninterrupted growling of the thunder, rebounding from the mountains of Java to those of Sumatra, strangely resembles the growling of an earthquake!

Suddenly I have a worried impression of mystery. Is anything going to happen? I drive away dark thoughts: Why of course, it can only be the thunder-storm that is growling and not the ground under me. At that moment I remember an evening which I spent in Sourabaya in the company of an Englishman, Mr. Leeland. That chance friend spoke to me most learnedly about the past of Java, explained to me the charm that Bali possessed for his artist's soul; but that was not the recollection that struck me at this moment, it was a collection of photos of Krakatoa . . . before and after the eruption! Was he not telling me that this region, in the opinion of geologists, would ever remain one of the points of least resistance of the earth's crust . . . and that it might very well happen that . . .? I particularly remember one of his photos: it showed a great submarine explosion which occurred recently in the immediate environs of the islet.

Now the idea obsesses me. . . . I picture the photo and the outline of Krakatoa in the background. The volcano seemed to be pretty close, just about as close as we

must be at this present moment! I try to remember: was the photo taken from the east? Presently I am weak enough to think that it can only have been taken from the east, and that therefore the *Kaimiloa* is now becalmed exactly at the spot which . . . at the spot where. . .

What can we do? Nothing! Wait: doubtless it would be a grand death to blow up like this at one go, straight up to Heaven, a novel death too, with a volcano to give me a good "initial velocity" as people say in ballistics! But I think that brutal death, however beautiful, only seems so when it happens to others.

I continue my promenading from the cabin to the deck and from the deck to the cabin. I try to peer through the darkness, to guess the size of the island that is hidden there quite close. Each flash of lightning makes the greyness of the surrounding night more opaque!

*Two o'clock in the morning*

At times a slight swell hits us broadside on, causing the sails to beat from starboard to port. Pulleys are swinging and creaking everywhere. Can this be the first shudder of the submarine crust before the eruption?

On the deck I listen intently. I seem to hear a noise of breakers towards the west. I hook up the sail to stop the banging of bamboos and pulleys; I want to hear better. . . . I hear . . . I don't hear . . . I hear . . . it's enough to send you crazy! And Tati, who is snoring away in the sleep of innocence in the further cabin! If he knew,—he who is so keen on seeing again his village of Trinité-sur-Mer, and going in solemn procession to offer his candle to the Virgin of Auray the moment he arrives in France! . . .

I am disgusted with myself! Why let myself be impressed by ridiculous thoughts? Once more I go down into the cabin. To the devil with breakers! Since I

cannot do anything to avoid them, I light the primus stove to make myself a cup of tea, at any rate the singing of the stove will prevent me from hearing the mysterious noises outside. Presently the water sings in the kettle, boils. I put out the primus.

But what is this? Again I hear the noise of water singing, but this time it is alongside the hull. I shove my nose outside: a tiny breeze from the north-east has risen, the sails have stopped flapping, and the *Kaimiloa* is gliding along on the smooth water pointing south-east.

The breeze freshens a little, settles down. The weather clears, a dark shadow is outlined astern. Krakatoa! It seems so very high above the water that it gives me the shivers to look at it.

At three o'clock in the morning I wake Tati.

"All is well," I say to him. "Good breeze, good course, all clear ahead!"

*2nd July. Latitude 6° 41' S.; longitude 104° 50' E.*

We have entered the great Indian Ocean. The volcanic cones of Java have disappeared on the horizon behind us; ahead of us 3,000 miles of water, plucky little *Kaimiloa*. It's up to you!



## Chapter XIV

### THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THE CAPE OF STORMS

8th July

A VERY heavy sea, for the last three days, a strong breeze blowing generally from the east, with unpleasant veers from the north-west with gusts of rain.

Sometimes the waves seem to us terrifying. Terrifying to look at only, for the *Kaimiloa* receives their assaults without flinching . . . or nearly so; I believe it is difficult to imagine a more stable type of boat, and yet the one that I am going to build in France will eclipse her.

We have already caught some nasty blows in this double canoe: only once did the books that are placed on a bookcase above my bunk (a mere plank laid there without even being nailed) fall upon my stomach. It was last night: so rough was the pitching that the two hulls were still quivering a few seconds after the shock. The two members of the crew may have been quivering too! This morning, Tati says to me with a note of admiration and astonishment:

"I have inspected everything (everything, for him, is the system of joining of the two hulls which he had heard so adversely criticized in Honolulu), well! Nothing has moved by a hair yet!"

He seems unable to believe his own eyes. If he knew that I rather share his surprise! . . .

9th July

The ocean seems desirous of calming its troubled spirits somewhat; the wind is blowing fresh from the south-east. How pleasant it is to take daily observations. Ever since the 2nd of July, the date on which we crossed the Strait of Sunda, we have been doing a daily average of 130 miles. Our record speed was on the 7th with 165 miles; yesterday and to-day, 150 and 152 miles. Not so bad for a wretched little double canoe, decried at her conception, disowned at her birth, an illegitimate child without identity papers, without nationality, without passport!

13th July

We are continuing our admirable daily averages. Yet I think that to-day the *Kaimiloa* is exaggerating: with a few square metres of mainsail and her minute jib she has done her 140 miles. I ought to say that it's blowing hard.

All the same Tati thinks that we have still got a little too much canvas up and discreetly accuses me of being too much of a *swotter*! Perhaps I am a little cruel in making the plucky little boat suffer thus, and in remaining insensible to her groans—cruel and perhaps imprudent! May the gods of Polynesia protect us!

Tati wakes me in the night towards 4 o'clock.

"Come and see, captain, the weather is taking on an ugly look, and it's already blowing hard enough to *décorner les cocus*."

I go up on deck, a black night, black sky . . . around us the wild roaring; my eyes getting used to the darkness, I can see all around us monstrous breaking wave crests, leaving on the ocean long pale trails. We are literally flying over the water, and the sea looks like a fury spitting its foam, out of spite for not being able to

swallow us up; and from the stern it is lashing us with hate-full bursts of spume, converted by the hurricane into mast-high spray.

We must lower the sail!

It is high time, a violent squall strikes us. The waves catch us up and boil as they break between the two hulls.

That operation over (it didn't last two minutes), we are shivering in all our limbs . . . but it is with the cold! For according to our custom (a custom designed to keep our linen dry), we have been working in our regulation uniform, that is to say without a stitch on. Now we have already done a good deal of southing since we left Java, and in these latitudes July is undoubtedly a winter month. Yet we are still in the tropics. Good God, how we will shiver, over there, to the south of the Cape of Good Hope!

To think that there are human beings who live in countries so cold, so cold that snow falls there and that sometimes water changes into ice. Those must be plucky fellows!

### *14th July*

To-day is our national and republican fête!

Yesterday Tati said to me:

"It's going to be fine to-morrow!"

He willed it to be fine, but I really think that his desire was not "willed" with sufficient force to influence the elements. To-day we are still having that same swinish weather.

Tati loves fêtes, and celebrating fêtes, but for him Nature must do her bit.

With a view to that 14th of July, he had as he says dumped two bottles of Burgundy from our Consul at Sourabaya; it had been agreed that on that day I was to surpass myself in the preparation of the macaroni, put-

ting into it a whole packet of Kraft cheese and a whole tin of tomatoes. He had even promised me a surprise for breakfast. On this occasion the pancakes were to be made with four eggs—four eggs which he had also previously dumped in a hiding place known to himself alone.

Alas, when he calls me, as he does every morning at 8 o'clock, I can see that he has on his look kept for unpleasant days.

"Don't expect me to make your coffee this morning, with such a sea," he announces in tragic tones.

To be sure the sea is not too appetizing to view; but knowing my mate, I pretend not to notice it.

"Did you sleep?" he asks.

"Why yes, a perfect night! I even had a dream! I was in a country under coconut trees which a light breeze scarcely . . ."

He feels that I am going to tease him (a bad habit of which I cannot rid myself), but knowing perfectly well that I did not have any such idyllic dream, he grumbles reproachfully:

"How could you sleep with all that row?"

"Perhaps it is because I am a fellow like Joffre, aware that everything is for the best, and there is nothing else to be done . . . so I snore."

For, at this moment, what is there to be done? Nothing, is there? The sails have been lowered . . . all we can do is to wait until it is over. If the boat breaks up in one of these nasty seas, oh, well! we are done for, aren't we? And no matter how we drown it's better for such an adventure to happen to us when we are half stupefied with sleep. We might perhaps imagine we are having a nightmare, that we are living a nightmare; and we should only wake up . . . dead! Funny isn't it? Dead, opposite the wide open gate of Paradise!

He doesn't enjoy the joke. Now it's his turn to give me the shivers:

"Well! Shall I tell you what I think? Shall I tell you what I think, eh? Well, we are going to the bottom!"

He explains to me that in order not to wake me up, he was obliged every hour to bale out huge bucketfuls of water from the starboard boat; that there is a leak there, and that if this weather continues . . . it is going to "get worse" and so what?

"So what? It's a catastrophe, Tati!"

Poor pal, he seems absolutely disgusted at not having succeeded in rousing me. He ought to know that if the starboard boat were really in the desperate state that he is pleased to describe he certainly would not have waited until this morning to tell me about it.

"Let's go and see that leak," I say to humour him.

"Well, that's the limit! Just now the water was squirting in everywhere, especially under the door, and since you have been here, not once! Now you will think that I have been pulling your leg!"

"Why no, you haven't been pulling my leg, but you're a bit nervy, Tati; you were counting on sunshine and fine weather for the 14th of July. You are disappointed, that's all."

And so I prepare the morning coffee. He watches me, vexed, for the morning coffee is one of his jobs, and I look as though I were poaching on his preserves; I am on the point of asking for the four eggs to make the pancakes, but I refrain. It would have been too much!

When we have drunk our coffee, I send Tati off to have a rest.

"You leave me alone in this boat, I am going to try and discover the cause of that leak."

He goes out grumbling.

I soon notice that if a little water is filtering under the door, more is coming in from the watertight panel of the small aft hold, exactly what was happening at our departure in the little forward holds. No doubt the hold is full and in order to reduce the level, the principle of communicating vessels must be put into force.

I set about making the door more watertight; as it is on a slide, I nail inside a piece of sailcloth that will trap the squirting water, will guide it forward and let it drain away through the cabin partition by means of an extra hole.

An hour later I call Tati.

He arrives beaming. What has happened? He has been thinking probably.

"Suppose we have a small drink of white wine?" I say to him gaily. "Look at my work, what do you think of it, not too neat, eh?"

He surveys it without a word. Outside we hear big waves breaking against the door, the water spurts under it: the sailcloth swells at once under the thrust, and slowly subsides; imprisoned by the sailcloth it drains outside: not a drop of water passes inside.

He swallows his glass of white wine at one draught and says to me:

"Not elegant, for sure, but not so rotten either!"

His morale has returned! I explain to him that the remainder of the water is coming in from the hold and that we shall have to make a hole in the stern of the hull, as we did in the bows of the hulls.

"Well, let's do it at once then," he exclaims. And presently, with a rope tied round his middle, armed with a brace and bit securely lashed, he lies flat on the deck, with half his body out of line, and with me sitting on his legs to act as counter weight; the waves are breaking over us, but the brace is turning. The hole is made:

instantly the water squirts out in a rush, returning to where it ought to have remained, to the sea.

We have another drink of white wine . . . then another!

The sea is howling worse than ever, but now she seems rather ridiculous in her vain anger.

"All the same," says Tati laughing, "we are beginning to have a lot of holes in this boat."

"Yes, old chap, and if we go on like this, it won't be a boat that reaches France, it will be a strainer!"

As we have had only one cup of coffee since the morning the effect of these little drinks of white wine exceeds my expectations. We are both slightly tipsy!

Full of zeal, I start without a word on the preparation of the macaroni. It is marvellous macaroni, fit to make Mussolini himself jealous. We break the neck of a second bottle of Burgundy. Result: this time we are completely blotto!

Tati, reaching a confidential mood, not caring in the least for the fracas of the tempest, launches gradually into one of those retrospective recitals of which he has the secret, once more baring his soul before me. First of all he accuses himself of his fit of depression this morning, he repents it. Then, gradually going further back, he repeats the confessions which he has already made, deals again with stories of the *Fou Po*, of Shiao Keu, of the tins of food which he used to gobble up on the sly when we were about to die of hunger, of the chronometer which he threw into the sea. I am, however, surprised to hear a little confession which hitherto he had kept concealed from me. The story of a tortured bird, which must have weighed heavily on his conscience for him to have kept it dark all these years.

As I listen to him I think it is a great pity that we have

no shorthand typist present to take down his tale: a novelist would find in it materials for one of the most astonishing psychological novels imaginable.

For the first time we have not hoisted our French ensign on this 14th of July: not that we have lost our pride in flaunting it and in showing it to the sea, but because I am too fond of its little bits of blue, white and red bunting, and because if it were flapping in this storm it would very soon become merely a scrap of frayed blue tied to the halliard.

Lord God, what a sea! What a jumble, what savage howls! Upon my word if on this day of national republican festival the people of France are as restless as this, there must be a confounded revolution going on there, a most lamentable confusion!

#### *15th July*

The weather is moderating slowly.

#### *21st July*

After three days of grey weather, of cold rains, here at last comes the sun. Ah! sun, dear sun, blessed be thou! How the devil can those human beings live for months, years, all their lives sometimes, in lands of fog and lowering skies? Doubtless, they are held there by their rapacious desire to make money. And why make money? In order, as they say, to make for themselves "a place in the sun." Their place in the sun? Let them keep it at home with their millions, I prefer mine at sea, without a bean!

#### *26th July*

And little *Kaimiloa* is still tearing along at a fine pace!

During the last few days we have been having glorious weather, sky cleansed of the smallest cloud, of a



blue so light, so delicate, that it shaded off imperceptibly to the horizon, and lay almost white upon the ocean; not the white of the tropical seas which is always a little milky, giving but an impression of colour, but an impalpable white giving an impression of light—the whole emphasized by the ocean's blue-black metallic mass. Occasionally only there would be visible here and there in the sky a tiny cloud, no bigger than a burst of shrapnel and as quickly dispelled. How happy one feels, bathed in nature's azure light!

Ever since this noon two enormous whales have been journeying with us. What monsters! I tried to photograph them, for sometimes they amused themselves by poking their heads out to have a look at the surface scenery. But the hussies did not always appear on the side where I was expecting them: time to take up my position, to point my camera, and they were gone chuckling. They looked as if they didn't care a damn for anybody, with their vast mouths split down to their ears!

Obviously the weather must be clear. Two little peaks are rising beyond the horizon, two points to star-board. They look like two islets seen from a distance of 30 miles; and they are the two volcanic summits of the island of Réunion, 3,000 and 2,600 metres about in height, which we see 120 miles away. That is to say 220 kilometres!

### *27th July*

Noon, we are north-south of Réunion.

Latitude 22° 50', 100 miles off the centre of the island.

### *28th July*

This time we have some fifteen whales to keep us company, I can take a few photos; they are coming and going, sometimes they look quite white in the clear

water; for they are amusing themselves, I don't know why, by swimming at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$  upon one side, showing us their bellies. They appear to me to be big, kindly, trustful beasts. Have they lost all recollection of whalers and their harpoons? Our *Kaimiloa* must doubtless appear to them a friendly boat! One of them gets herself cursed for having had the unpleasant, or else the humorous idea of spouting into the wind a few metres away, which is blowing fresh; this causes a cold and unpleasant rain to fall back upon our naked bodies; it isn't so very warm in this corner of the Indian Ocean! The same whale, after a little tour of inspection around our ship, begins to follow slowly in our wake, then, increasing her pace, works herself under us, between the two hulls. To Tati, who is forward, I yell:

"Look, she is working herself under the boat!"

I hear him exclaim:

"Good God, her head is bigger than the two boats put together!"

As I myself, standing in the stern, can only see at that moment the half of its body wedged under us, I watch with some apprehension its mighty tail which is drawing near as it gently beats the water seven or eight metres further away.

What a monster! I think.

"I hope she's not going to start fooling with us!" shouts my mate.

"Not so loud, Tati, not so loud, you might perhaps frighten her: what would happen if she wagged her tail more furiously?"

But she passes on. I don't mind watching these kindly beasts, but not at too close quarters.

That night the breeze freshens, turns to the south-west, then to the south and settles in the south-south-west. The sea has got rougher.

We shorten canvas for the night. What is the good of piling on the miles in the nor'west?

*29th July*

A beastly day: a grey sky, cold, unmanageable sea, bad course. If this damned wind keeps on we shall bring up on the south coast of Madagascar.

*31st July*

It was time for this to come to an end. Besides one cannot always be having head winds and nasty seas. Occasionally, well and good, it makes you the better appreciate fair winds and manageable seas. It is blowing again from the east and north-east; the sea and the sky are becoming blue again; the sun is beaming.

An enormous whale, perhaps the biggest we have seen, is along athwart our course, pointing south-west. She is steering to the fourth part of a degree; she must know exactly where she is going. I am a bit vexed at seeing her pass by so disdainfully. Where can she be running to in such a hurry? Maybe a love tryst. That puts ideas into my head! Come on Tati, let's hoist the sail double block!

*6th August*

I cannot believe my senses. Upon my word we might be sailing in the tropics and in fine weather! A sea almost smooth, a little breeze well set, blowing between the east and south-east, a burning sun which has returned more caressing than ever. Upon my word, the approach to the terrible Cape of Storms is not turning out too bad!

This is a great day, which we are spending wisely in putting some order into the boats; for they have been working mightily these last few days.

We have two broken springs in the joining beams of

the platform. Seeing which, Tati begins by having a little retrospective fright, but when he learns that they have already been broken for two days and that the platform has held just the same, his admiration for what he calls the "assemblage" increases more than ever. We have no spare springs. I remove those from the mainstay, which are in perfect condition, and replace them by the broken springs patched up as best we can. I had rather see the mast go than the two boats part company: besides, owing to the way it is fixed on the platform, the mast should hold even without springs, even without rigging.

Then we spread the bedding on the dry deck, and the linen all clammy with moisture, we open wide all our windows and doors. Sunshine, sunshine!

A fish, the first one we have seen since we left the Strait of Sunda is prowling alongside.

"Quick, Tati, the spear," I say. "We are going to have fresh fish to-day with our rice." My mate hands me the instrument, then he takes it back.

"The last fish we caught, was in Torres Strait. Don't you remember? We already had one aboard. We let it trail astern and drown; a squall had just hit us. We might have let it go; but we didn't. An hour later, we thought we could sail over the reef and we grounded!"

"That's true: we were not decent to that fish. We had caught it for the sole pleasure of fishing, since we had heaps of food on board. Now too, we have plenty of food, haven't we? You are quite right, keep the spear!"

### *15th August*

Tati has also remembered that the 15th August is a fête day, and out of a new hiding place he pulls a bottle of Pontet Canet (the last, says he) and a last

packet of macaroni. We have been going rather hard on the macaroni. As a rule we eat rice one day, and macaroni the next; now there are only some tins of macaroni left. Oh! It is not bad, but it's ready-made stuff. It is not as good as that which we prepare *à la Kaimiloo*. In comparison, it's nothing, less than nothing, just plain food!

Since yesterday we have had weather equal to the best "*de la carte*," as they used to say in the old days of sail. Doubtless, we are not covering much ground, but to see everything so clear, so calm, so light around one, makes one feel happy. The weather is so fine that it looks as if the mischievous gods were playing a prank on Tati, who was so dreading the approach to the Cape and its raging seas; they have sent us a gentle and lazy sea glistening in the sunshine—winter sunshine of course, but so warm that he can't resist the temptation of taking a header into it.

"When the Honolulu yachtsmen know that I have bathed off the Cape," says he, "they'll never believe me. They had given me such a scare with their Cape of Good Hope!"

We dine on deck.

A company of whales arrives from straight ahead, this time coming from the north-east. Tati is very excited over these animals because for the last few days he has been deep in the reading of Melville's *Moby Dick*. He is by no means keen on some *Moby Dick* or other starting some of his pranks. Why should they? These beasts to whom the American author, who knew them well, attributed an almost human intelligence, might perhaps, without being blamed for it, act as humans do. Attack, kill, destroy . . . for fun! Don't we go and hunt out beasts in their forests? Why should not fish attack men who venture upon their oceans?

But they don't, if we leave them alone.

I agree with Melville that these whales possess a human intelligence, but it would appear that they have in addition what men rarely possess: a heart! God grant that we never meet a whale with a man's mentality. It would not wait long before treating itself, just for fun, as the Americans say, to the pleasure of launching our two little canoes into the air with a good smack of its tail.

*16th August (Night)*

It was too good to last. Swinish weather to-day. Thanks all the same, God, for having given us those fine days yesterday and the day before!

To-night the sea is going down. All the same we have no canvas up. Violent gusts from the west.

It's suddenly turning cold.

*18th August*

Tati wakes me by informing me that the weather is looking better, that we might perhaps hoist sail again. To be sure, the sea has only preserved, from its mad raging of the night, a kind of oppressed breathing which is felt in the shape of a long swell. It no longer has the strength to howl, I mean to break.

The breeze has died away, but we hoist all the same, if only to dry the canvas.

Towards 3 o'clock in the afternoon a puff rises from the east, freshens, settles and freshens still more.

My observation places me at 30 miles east of Port Elizabeth. In a rift we think we can see a corner of land.

Moreover, I do not understand why my calculations should place me so close to land. Possibly Tati, during the last few days, when on watch, hauled in closer than I intended?

I rather suspect him of it. A week ago, in the course of a short discussion, he said to me:

"I have my reasons for not wishing to take too southerly a course."

I asked him for explanations.

He entrenched himself behind these words:

"I cannot tell you now, I shall tell you later on."

At the time it seemed to me rather difficult to go round Africa without going far south and I was about to tell him that the Mozambique channel was not precisely a canal like that of Suez, and that the *Kaimiloa*, not possessing casters for travelling on land, had to manage as best she could on the sea with God's good winds, and that God, for reasons doubtless known to Him alone, yet quite accessible to our human understanding, caused a good deal of west wind to blow in the south of Africa, and that consequently it wouldn't be a bad thing for *Kaimiloa* to sail well to the south. But realizing that he was hardly in a mood to enjoy being teased, I wisely held my tongue. Is he afraid of the cold? I don't think so. Not so much as I am, anyway!

Perhaps it is some superstition? That would be more respectable.

Well, I shall see: if he takes it on himself to alter course too much while I am asleep, I'll find it out all right when I take my sight in the morning. Then I shall be reduced to showing him somewhat "modified" positions, so that he will think he is where he would like to be, and we shall be where we ought to be, and everybody will be pleased.

Just now a seal showed its bearded nose close to us. Brrr! That doesn't make us feel any warmer.

Numerous birds are flying around our ship! Albatross, mallemocks, speckled and other petrels. We follow their graceful flight with sympathy and they are

aware of it. During an hour of flat calm they came and settled on the water all round the ship: we crumble a few "crackers" for them. They swim towards us near enough to touch our ship. This must be the mating season for albatross: they go and hover in the sky in pairs, settle together on the water, and rocked by the swell, tease each other gently with their beaks. How queer it must feel to be kissed on the mouth with a big beak, hard and hooked, like theirs! But perhaps it's the same with birds as with human beings; possibly it's more the idea that you expect from an exciting sensation rather than the physical gesture itself; by the way birds must have plenty of imagination too.

### *19th August*

So this is the Cape of Storms! This night is certainly the finest of the whole voyage: clear, light, luminous, a nice regular little breeze on the quarter, exactly what we need. All sail is set, our wake leaving its phosphorescence in a straight line on the dark water. A flat sea—strangely flat.

Two more days of this blessed weather and we shall be round the street corner!

### *20th August*

Every time I praise the delights of the Cape, the mischievous gods enjoy giving me the lie.

How quickly the weather changes in these regions!

At 3 o'clock yesterday morning, I handed over to Tati a nice fair breeze from the north-north-east.

At 5 o'clock abnormal rolling wakes me (it must truly have been abnormal!).

"It's freshening hard," says Tati. "It is also veering forward full nor'west."

I look at the barometer; it has fallen catastrophically!



We are quickly on deck, and once more lower all sails, and after tying everything down, we go to bed.

What a night! That gloomy hissing, those brutal shocks of the sea which seem as if they wanted to smash up our two hulls, prevent me . . . almost, from sleeping!

### *22nd August*

And this went on all day yesterday! Poor little *Kaimiloa*! You have been put through a hard test, but you seem to have managed to hold your own! Bravo!

Is that the way the Atlantic means to welcome this little boat, which has come, by the grand tour, to bring it a greeting from its great sister next door, the Pacific? Can the oceans too be jealous of one another?

But the storm has spent its force; to-day calm has returned, on the sea as in the sky. All that remains to us is the recollection of hours of anguish, of waves hammering the hulls, or else falling in a rage upon us, and above all that gloomy hissing of the hurricane that rose *crescendo* from deep notes like a plaint to veritable howlings: screams of madness, of hysterical fury, whose piercing notes still seem to be jarring my ears.

It began on the 20th at daybreak. We had only kept on our little bit of jib. Even that was too much! At 10 o'clock the forestay to which it was hanked gives way; an hour later the brutal shocks make us turn somewhat pale in the cabin where we had shut ourselves up; it's the port tiller which has broken. The heavy main-piece, no longer under control, is swinging to the wave and the long rake is beating against the hulls, at the risk of smashing up. We immobilize it as best we can, with a multitude of lashings stuck pretty well everywhere, and we again take refuge in the cabin soaked and shivering.

The sea becomes as wild as it is possible for it to be: we then make up our minds to use our sea anchor: it has been so cracked up by our "Marine Supply" at Honolulu, that we are almost entitled to expect miraculous results. Is it not fitted with a sheet iron tank to allow oil to seep from it, the said tank skilfully fitted into the canvas cone?

We pay out the apparatus, at the end of a steel wire 20 metres long fitted with swivels, we add a length of some 50 metres of thick rope, and we await the miracle! Two minutes later, we see the rope slack, rising and falling on the wave and the *Kaimiloa* falling back on the beam.

Has the beautiful sea anchor given us the slip? Not a bit of it! It's still held by its warp fixed at the peak of the cone.

By taking in and paying out we manage to bring the whole apparatus aboard. It is the steel wire that gave way. Doubtless it didn't possess enough elasticity to resist the snubbing; we replace it by a stout rope and pay out the lot overboard.

A few minutes later we again fall on the beam. The beautiful iron ring of the cone has been flattened out like a sea biscuit, and the floating anchor, by this time too floating, leaps about in a ridiculous fashion in the midst of the waves. Yet that gadget looked well in the shop window of the "Marine Supply". For a sea anchor there is nothing like a few good wooden spars or bamboos properly lashed and paid out from the bows in the Chinese fashion. But there you are, on the *Kaimiloa* we have no good wooden spars, and the few bamboos that remain to us we preserve most carefully for replacing or repairing those of our mainsail.

In order to drift a little more, head to wind, we hoist a little bit of triangular sail astern. Immediately she rides

more easily. We might even be doing pretty well if the sea were consistently bad, but those confounded waves amuse themselves by rising, falling, breaking on all sides.

We inspect the caulking of all the "windows." It would not be much fun to see all that cold water squirt upon our bunks. Our cabin is already damp enough as it is, from the water that trickles down from our oil-skins whenever we return from our rapid visits to the platform.

Towards the middle of the afternoon another stay snaps, the windward foresail.

Let it stay broken. We'll wait for a better opportunity to repair it.

All our thoughts are on the starboard rudder, hoping that it will hold out. We have stuffed it with washer after washer, and under their give the tackle seems to work freely. Tatibouet who, ever since our experience on the *Fou Po*, has at last become a convinced believer in the "spring" cannot think of anything better than fixing one more of these. I have to explain to him that there are already too many, and that one more would change elasticity into rigidity; he thinks I am making fun of him and looks at me in despair, with his bit of rubber washer in his hand.

I divert his thoughts by fetching from a hiding place a venerable bottle of "Fine Napoléon," a present from Mr. Constable of Honolulu, intended to act as a bracer in case of a nasty blow. It is now or never!

It is no good hiding things, although I am against the use of alcohol . . . on principle, I am forced to admit that in circumstances like the present, a swig of alcohol warms up your innards, and shows up events in a better light. They were well aware of that, those sailing captains who, under regulations, used to serve out tots of rum to their crews, when nearing Capes Horn and

Good Hope. We preserve the tradition. But if I remember rightly, this Fine Napoléon has nothing in common with the rum of the old sailing mail-boats which the steward used to lace with water and methylated spirits, and season with pepper, to the great satisfaction of Jack Tar who used to say:

"Ah, that's the stuff! It scratches your inside."

We are getting this blow about 37° south in the longitude of Agulhas, the southernmost point of Africa. In a word on the very threshold of the Atlantic. And, what was somewhat disturbing, in the region of icebergs. Our position on the chart places us between two points, indicated by notes: the one, "here seven icebergs of 200 to 700 feet in height were seen on the 6th August, 1892"; the other, "here numerous icebergs were sighted in April, 1852." And here we are in mid-August, in mid-winter. To go and stick ourselves against an iceberg, the deuce! That would be a nasty adventure. I often poke my nose out to glance round the horizon, and I stay out a little longer than I would really like to. At such moments I see again clearly that mountain of ice which I had observed off Cape Horn when I was a ship's boy on the four-masted *Dunkerque*. A fantastic wall that reflected the tints of the sky and of the sea so accurately that they seemed to blend with it and cease to exist.

Tati spends the day in the starboard canoe making a new tiller. At first we found it a mighty job unwedging the broken piece out of the main-piece, then fitting in the other. We succeeded admirably. Alas! ten minutes later a cracking sound is heard; the work so beautifully carried out by Tatibouet has broken in two pieces.

Thinking in my vanity that I can do better, I spend the night shaping in my turn a spare tiller. We fit it at daybreak. Only three minutes later, same cracking sound: two pieces; I am infinitely mortified! "I have

lost face" as they used to say in China! We replace the "strings" to prevent the rake from beating.

I amuse myself repairing a primus stove and send it across to the port cabin, for we are dying of cold and damp there.

Soon it roars fit to explode, and I almost sit on it so as not to lose any of the heat it gives out. My somewhat unclean underclothes, my damp oilskins are steaming, and I have to beg Tati to half open the cabin door between two packets of green water, so that each time a puff of fresh air saves us from asphyxia.

But it is warm all the same in the closed cabin and every time one of us comes down again after having gone up on the platform to cast a rapid glance on the raging ocean, the other, on hearing the door open can't help repeating the classic phrase which Jack Tar hears in the icy streets of Toulon, when bitten by the mistral:

"Eh! Come into my house, little man, there's a fire!"

But all this is over; the storm has once more spent its force; the sea and the breeze appear exhausted with their vain anger: the *Kaimiloa* is still there, faithful at her post, bruised perhaps in her carcase, but above all vexed, I think, at having been so ill-received on the threshold of the Atlantic! Being the first boat from the Pacific to come to these regions, says she, I had a right to more consideration!

There is now a flat calm. But all the same we have all sails up. Presently, caressed by the sunshine, the *Kaimiloa* recovers the sprightly look that she puts on on fête days. On the platform, on the cabin roofs, hooked to the bamboos of the mainsail are hanging up to dry jerseys, shirts, trousers, towels and oilskins, and, as the whole of this wardrobe is in rags, and as these rags are all of indefinable tints, you might imagine yourself to be beneath the stall of a second-hand clothes dealer!

As I look at these rags warming themselves in the sun, I seem to see them changing gradually into fine linen. It's funny how rags hanging in the sunshine no longer look like rags!

### *25th August*

We are again ready. The tiller is patched up with many springs; Tati has mended the stays provisionally. Two bamboos in the mainsail have been strengthened. All that remains is to wish for a little fair wind to get us to Capetown.

A bad meridian latitude yesterday showed me that the storm had drifted us 25 miles to the south, longitude unknown; an accurate sight this morning has made us recover these 25 miles to the north and, as a pleasant surprise, blows us 40 miles to the west, to windward! After all we might have guessed the existence of this current working up against the storm. My calculations merely serve to fix it with greater precision. Any sailor, no doubt, with a minimum sense of observation will always be able to spot the very general trends of a current at sea. Waves which for landsmen will ever remain waves, teach many things by their behaviour to the inquisitive eye of the sailor who lives not "on" the sea, but "with" the sea. If this current is kind enough to hold on, we shall see the land of Africa to-morrow, in the landfall south of Capetown—even with this present calm. It would be the limit if this too gentle breeze did not rise, and if the current let us pass in sight of the port without our being able to reach it.

### *26th August*

At 2 o'clock in the afternoon, with extremely good visibility, we catch sight of a little violet line rising from the horizon straight ahead . . . land!

Half an hour later the line is more precise, both ends finish up in a right angle. It's the celebrated Table Mountain.

Just a little, a very little fair breeze, and to-morrow, good *Kaimiloa*, you will be dropping your anchor in the bay of the Cape. You will have deserved it!

### *27th August*

The wind was fair, but not too fair; scarcely strong enough to give a bit of life to our languishing sails. It leaves us all night under the sweep of the Good Hope lighthouse. At daybreak, it rises at last, fresher, increases, then settles, the rascal, north-north-west, that is to say dead ahead.

Soon it is blowing in gusts and the sea is increasing visibly. Between noon and 4 o'clock we carry out the most difficult piece of navigation of the whole voyage. We tack and tack about, each time wearing ship, so hard is the breeze, and each time lowering the mainsail as a precaution.

Our final tack places us at last well to windward of the entrance into Capetown; and we are going to be able to reach our goal in one board.

All sailing men are aware of the sweet satisfaction that they feel when, after fighting head winds and seas, they find themselves to windward of the place they mean to reach.

But a heartbreaking thing happens! As soon as we have gone about to make the last tack, the breeze, getting more and more mischievous, veers suddenly from north-north-west to south-west. That is to say, if this morning we had lowered sail, if we had not taken all this trouble to gain some 10 miles to windward, if we had remained lying in our bunks reading a good book waiting for a "change," we should have been equally

well placed. Nothing gets more on your nerves than a useless effort!

So it is with a fair wind that the *Kaimiloa* enters the harbour.

28th August

Our arrival at Capetown will remain one of the pleasantest recollections of the voyage.

The wind is strong, the sea stormy. We are doing a good eight knots. Tati and I, soaked to the bones by the spray, forget that we are cold, so excited are we at approaching. The plucky little boat, in spite of an enormous following sea, is steering without anyone at the tiller better than she would do in the hands of the best steersman.

How is the harbour orientated? I don't know, I have only a large-scale map and no "Nautical Instructions"! By means of a magnifying glass I can see that the town lies well inside the bay. What then can be the meaning of that long dazzling line of lights facing the ocean? As we draw near, the light breaks up into a thousand fires following the coast and climbing in regular lines up the mountain. There is no doubt about it, they must have been building a lot in this place since the map was drawn!

Ahead of us we see a steamer. She appears to be stationary, brilliantly lit up and with bright navigation lights. What does this mean? Can we be at war? Can this be an examination vessel? So many things may have happened since we left Sourabaya.

Soon we pass within a few metres of her stern: there is no chance of her seeing us, for according to our good habit, we are sailing with all lights out, at night the only light on board the *Kaimiloa* being my inseparable cigarette!



She isn't a warship, but an enormous cargo boat in trouble; men are staggering along the alleys brilliant with electric light, clinging from one breast rail to another. For this big steamer, lying athwart the swell, is rolling 30° from side to side. Probably there is something broken in her engines, for her surplus steam is hissing out! Perhaps damage to her screw? I am about to heave to and to signal our presence by means of the electric torch and to shout to her captain:

"Steamer, ahoy! Do you want a tow?"

I content myself by saying to Tati:

"How seasick we should be, on a thing like that!"

We move away at a great pace, and Tati says to me, somewhat mockingly in his turn:

"This time I shall believe you when you tell me that the *Kaimiloa* can lick a steamer. . . . Look at her. . . eh? Say we give her a tow, licked as she is, hand over hand?"

The swell becomes stronger and stronger and appears the more so as it gets shorter; catching us from the stern, we see the land rising and falling, rising with bright lights, falling pitch dark, unless it is we who are going up on the crests and descending into the abyss.

Bah! after all I am entitled to make this mistake and to consider the *Kaimiloa* as the fixed and immovable centre of the world around which the poor little earth is dancing. Such an error is very human: did we not for a long time consider our planet as the centre of the universe? And do we not, in our vanity, still find the idea very unpleasant that she is nothing but a poor little grain of sand in the universe—less after all, than the *Kaimiloa* lost in the bosom of the oceans?

We shiver more and more in this wind laden with icy spray, beaten at times by little drops of rain that

seem to filter to the marrow of our bones! Yet since we passed the Cape, I have been wearing the whole of my wardrobe on my back; I have put on jersey upon jersey, scraps of shirt upon scraps of shirt, trousers upon trousers, the whole adorned with indefinable bits of linen around my neck, strings holding everything in place. Every day I have grown visibly. What a pity I can't cover the whole lot with my oilskins which have suddenly grown too small.

Tati and I are barefooted, for, so, one clings better to the deck of a sailing ship, perhaps also because there is no trace of a pair of boots on board!

But we do not feel the bite of the wind. Our arrival is so beautiful! The nearer we approach the worse the sea becomes; I am amazed at the way our plucky little boat rises so lightly to the breaking waves that are catching her astern, when we might well expect to be pooped by them.

All those lights scare me a little. I point to a lighthouse which seems to me to be the entrance lighthouse. Tati, attentive to every command, is keeping the boat on her course.

"A bit to starboard! A bit to port!" And every time he wonders: "She's steering like she never did. All I have to do is to haul taut a bit of the india-rubber to windward or to leeward!"

We are about to pass several dozen metres away from the lighthouse. Its sweeping light is showing up a raging sea. What does this mean? Breakers burst savagely upon the rocks of the beach which must be quite close. Along a boulevard, dazzling with light, cars keep going and coming, pedestrians run across the streets with their hands clinging to their hats. I see umbrellas turning inside out! And the swell that pursues us, the raging sea a few metres away from this life on land impresses

me. I look for a second light which the chart says ought to be red. But I see red lights pretty well everywhere . . . which, as I look more closely, turn out to be the lights of cinemas or restaurants.

Suddenly one of them looks more seamanlike. We draw near with eyes wide open, black spots stand out to starboard; jetties, probably.

We reduce sail. . . . It is the red light all right. As soon as ready, we turn to starboard. Suddenly the sea drops, the wind too, blowing only in puffs. Lights are revealed in tiers! It's the bay! We're there. . . .

Out of superstition, Tati hadn't wished to get ready the anchor, the chain is still in the little stern hold; but it only takes two minutes to get everything out.

"Stand by to anchor," he calls to me!

We are gliding on a smooth sea, taking advantage of the variable puffs, and we enter the roadstead.

A dark mass is presently outlined in the background, massive, square, almost unreal: Table Mountain!

We round several big steamers at their moorings, and nearly ram one of them; on hearing Tati, who is working the lead, calling to me:

"Nine metres, eight metres," I yell at him fit to waken all the sleeping ships:

"Let go the anchor, lad!"

The anchor grips, the good little *Kaimiloa* swings head to wind, and to Tati who is bent double watching the stiffening chain, I administer a thump fit to put his shoulder out of joint:

"Here we are, Tati, this is Capetown, we have done with the Cape. We're there!" And at that moment I am seized with a most ridiculous shivering fit, my nerves which have been tense too long now give way; the strain over, I at once feel my frozen feet, my soaking bones; a fit of fever shakes me.

"You go to bed, quickly, Captain," advises kind Tati; "we shall put things straight to-morrow! And now I am going to make you a nice hot cup of tea."

A few minutes later he brings the promised cup to my bunk with almost religious devotion; a full mug, a good half litre!

Never in my life have I drunk such perfect tea!

But I didn't finish drinking it, for very soon, like an animal, I fell asleep.

## Chapter XV

### CAPETOWN

**D**AYLIGHT is barely peeping when a shock shakes our boats: a motor-craft is boarding us.

Still asleep, I grumble:

"Well, what is it! Can't you let people sleep in peace here?" And I turn over determined to go on with my interrupted sleep. Tati gets up.

"It was the harbour launch," he informs me. "There was a bloke aboard who looks as if he had just dropped from the moon; he asked me where we had come from, I told him. From Honolulu! He looked at me funny like and went off without saying a word!"

Half an hour later I again hear the roar of a motor. It is a small auxiliary cutter with a man aboard. She draws near, stops, and starts off again, working round the *Kaimiloa*. The man doesn't appear to see me: his eyes are concentrated on the strange boat which he has just discovered; I wave my hand in greeting, but his free hand is too busy to reply to me. In an absent-minded way and in most comical fashion he is using it to push his yachtsman's cap to the nape of his neck so that he may scratch his forehead, then to pull it down again on his forehead in order to scratch his neck! What on earth can this gadget be? He seems to be asking himself.

At the same moment the big launch that had wakened us just now re-emerges from the harbour, making straight for us. This time she is filled to the point of

sinking with men wearing caps and braided uniforms. It is the harbour master, a few pilot officers, the doctor, the customs.

I remember sceing in the lagoon at Jaluit, in the Marshall Islands in the Pacific, a similar launch arrive filled with similar braided officials.

On that occasion we met sly and uneasy looks coming from the little slanting eyes of Asiatics, false and shifty; the sequel to the adventure was moreover in perfect agreement with the painful impression caused by this first contact.

But now, on seeing all these faces lit up with a broad smile, with sympathetic curiosity, we feel at once that Capetown is going to be a good port of call.

"You have come from Honolulu? How did you do it! And what was your last port of call?"

"Sourabaya!"

"Sourabaya in the Dutch East Indies?"

"Why yes! We left it two months ago. . . ."

Tati, for whom accuracy in dates is an almost sacred thing, corrects me:

"Not two months, Captain, two months less one day."

The officials look at each other, look at the boat which they have just boarded, inspect us from the keel to the truck of the mast; I feel that Frenchmen in their places would have expressed their astonishment by the simple exclamation: "*Ah! ben merde, alors!*"

The chief pilot says to us:

"But you've done a record crossing! Never has a boat of your tonnage crossed the Indian Ocean in so short a time. . . ."

We straighten ourselves up. Then we have to give a number of explanations: about the construction of the boat, her behaviour at sea, our life aboard. I do it with

good grace, for these men are all sailors. The chart showing our course to the south of the Cape, beyond the iceberg limit, causes a great impression.

"You were there during the last few days, when that last storm was blowing, which tore away a portion of the mole at the bottom of the bay?"

"Why, yes!"

They cannot believe their eyes. After an hour of amused chatter, they remember that they have come on duty. The doctor fills in the health papers with his own hand, the customs officer the declaration of provisions and supplies, and each seems to wish to apologize for making me sign the documents.

At this moment (it is eight o'clock), a big cargo boat, moored close to us, the one I had nearly rammed as we tacked last night, hoists her ensign. I think I must be mistaken: blue, white, red: she's French! *Léopold Louis Dreyfus*. My surprise is justified, for she is the first home ship that I have come across after six years of cruising; true we have not encountered many of other nationalities. A second launch, laden with other inquisitive officials, comes alongside; she has picked up on her way from the French cargo boat a little mate from home, who jumps aboard.

"Our Commander," he informs us, "has seen your flag. He has heard of your voyages from the American newspapers and he has sent me to tell you that he places himself at your disposal. Provisions, repairs, anything you like!"

We are touched by this offer.

But first of all the Harbour Master wants to give us quiet moorings in the yacht harbour.

"How long are you going to stay with us?"

"A week."

"What! a week? Everybody remains at the Cape

several months at least! Harry Pidgeon has just been spending eight months here."

An hour later we take up our new position; reporters, photographers are already here. News travels rapidly at the Cape. Visitors are beginning to prow around our ship.

In order to get a little peace, we decide to go and pay a visit to the friendly Commander of the French steamer that afternoon.

Having launched our dinghy, we make for the roadstead and come alongside the cargo boat *Léopold Louis Dreyfus*. We shake French hands with effusion!

A few moments later our small craft, slung up, is hoisted by means of a winch and deposited on the deck of the big steamer. Our communications with our ship and with land are cut off and our cabins are prepared on board. Good meals are awaiting us, says the Commander, washed down with good wines from home.

"What would you particularly like now?" he asked me.

"A good hot bath. I haven't washed since we left Sourabaya. That's two months ago!" (Two months less one day, corrects Tati.)

Would you believe it: I soap myself vigorously with the help of a brush, a hard carpet brush, and when the operation is over, I look at my bath water with surprise: it is hardly dirty! I could have waited a few months longer!

An American naval officer had told me when we left Honolulu:

"If by any chance your double canoe reaches Capetown, you will see!"

"What will I see?"

"You will see that the English always look with an



unfavourable eye upon non-Britishers who do things at sea: they will be courteous, they generally are, but in a very skilful way they will make you feel that you are meddling with things that don't concern you, that in their country you are an intruder poaching on their preserves. You see, they are still at the stage of 'Britannia Empress of the Seas, Britannia rules the waves'!"

My naval officer had narrow views, a rare thing in the profession.

In vain I told him that I had already met a great many Englishmen in the course of my voyage and that they had impressed me as a people composed entirely of gentlemen; in vain I had told him of the courtesy with which I had been received at Port Moresby by Sir Hubert Murray, Governor-General of Papua, that model administrator of native populations; or given him details concerning the hospitality offered me at Tulagi by Mr. Ashley, Governor of the Solomon Islands, at a time when I was a great deal depressed both physically and morally; he then insisted upon receiving me in his home and nursed me there with brotherly humanity; in vain I spoke to him of other friends more obscure, traders, even beachcombers for whom our voyages and our studies were but an opportunity to reaffirm their sympathy, he wouldn't believe me. He would if he were present-to-day at the arrival of the *Kaimiloa* at Capetown!

Yes, our fortnight's call was a fortnight of rejoicing! I shall not forget our moorings opposite the Royal Capetown Yacht Club, our thousand and one visitors and the atmosphere which they created, so sympathetically maritime.

There are many yacht clubs in the world, more important doubtless in the luxury of their headquarters and in the quality of the craft that are attached to them, but there are few as "seamanlike" in spirit.

Nothing was more restful than the active life of this club, a life that seemed to unite all its members in the same passion, in the same love without distinction of birth, education, or bank balance! How pleasant it was to see them all on Saturdays and Sundays, ridding themselves of all the poisons of a week at work in their dull offices, of the worries of their daily struggles, forgetting all the narrow obligations of the great city in the fresh and pure sea breezes.

The rich banker would make fast a sheet, would heave an anchor without a thought that it was one of his clerks at the tiller who was issuing orders; and some evenings I saw bosses and employees running out the moment the offices were closed, helping each other to repair their boats, giving a hand to their regatta rivals so that they might be absolutely ready for the struggle, and handling needles and palms until two o'clock in the morning, the while singing in hearty chorus a good old sea chanty from the days of the wooden ships!

And surely this magnificent band of yachtsmen must love the sea, for the pretty roadstead of Capetown is dominated by an eyesore of most repulsive aspect—a horrible black factory with a foliage of chimney stacks shaped like blunderbusses spitting out night and day an oily soot, which makes the town filthy (which doesn't worry me in the least) but also, if the wind is blowing from Table Mountain, the sails, hulls, and decks of the little yachts at their moorings.

This calamity falls one night upon the *Kaimiloa* in the shape of a greasy cloud, and her bright yellow and red colours, her Polynesian *tikis* that accentuate her lines, disappear under a shapeless smudge of black oily smoke! Two pretty yachts, which their owners had made all spick and span the day before, were dribbling with soot as if they had been polluted by the visit of a whole watch

of stokers and greasers going off duty from a coaling ship.

It appears that this building serves to provide light for the town, and is called the "Central Electric"! It is indeed a pity that its "central" position should enable it to retaliate for giving the inhabitants light at night by taking from them, by its curtain of soot, a good deal of sunshine during the day.

Furious, I say to a group of yachtsmen, who have returned disgusted from their boats:

"Isn't there in your English law a saying that whoever causes damage to his neighbour should repair it?"

"Suppose you were taking a smart and well-dressed woman for a walk in the town. A passing sweep rubs against her and turns her magnificent frock into a black rag. You would kick that lout's posterior and call a policeman, wouldn't you? After all your boat is your wife, isn't she? You are equally proud of her beauty, her lines, her elegance! You may tell me that this horrible factory is in the public interest. Lighting for the city! But so is the sweep. What about chimneys on fire? Well then?"

"Are there any Frenchmen here?" I asked our Consul on my arrival.

"Bah!" he answered, disgusted, "a few hairdresser's assistants!"

He forgot to inform me that there were in addition two Professors of French at the Cape University, who rushed aboard our ship and asked me to give a lecture at the "French Club."

In spite of a natural shyness in relating my adventures and a physical discomfort which I feel when relating them in public, I agreed—and was delighted.

For this small French Club, of which our Consul

was unaware, taught me one comforting thing: it is that all men are not shortsighted. This French Club which, to be sure, only includes four or five fellow countrymen, consists of some 200 members who all speak our language! Properly speaking it is the "Club of the friends of the French language." There I saw, proudly displayed on the walls of the meeting room, our three colours, and under that emblem were gathered together Englishmen, Dutchmen, Belgians, Germans, Jews (among whom some of the most interesting were the victims of Hitler's ridiculous Aryan myth), Afrikaners (Boers), Italians, Spaniards, and I know not what else. In a word, a veritable little League of Nations, a League united in a common spirit of friendship and mutual help, for the simple reason that they love to speak the clear and luminous language of France!

What a fine example of internationalism these good people gave me; and I thought (for I shall always be simple-minded) that if in that distant town of South Africa, the love of our speech can create such a union, love, plain love, the love of our neighbour, that is to say humanity, may perhaps be realized some day.

How surprised I was when two days before weighing anchor, at one of the weekly meetings of the "Club," I was presented with a pretty souvenir: the tooth of a sperm whale beautifully polished and mounted as an ashtray with this inscription: "*En souvenir des Amis de la langue française du Cap, 9 Septembre 1937.*"

And my surprise was at its height when I heard that, on the morning of our departure, a delegation of some ten ladies had come to the Yacht Club pier ready, at any cost, to face the danger of drowning with a wind that blew a hurricane, in order to come aboard the *Kaimiloa* and bring us the wishes of the "Club" for a pleasant journey, and that, with a delicate and touching gesture,

each of these ladies had provided herself with a little blue, white and red ensign.

Had the weather permitted, we would certainly have heard, in the midst of the waving flags, the vibrating notes of the "Marseillaise" rising from those international throats!

Mr. Consul, there is something more and better than Frenchmen at the Cape: there are foreigners who love France.

I heard echoes of the passage of Alain Gerbault in his *Firecrest*. Everybody was fond of him, although they found him very temperamental: for some days, even hours, he would be in a sociable mood, and show people round his *Firecrest* with much courtesy, then without any apparent reason the wind would veer, he would shut himself up in his cabin, and on the approach of any dinghy he would shove his angry head out of his port-hole and yell: "Go away" so fiercely that the boldest of visitors would instantly turn about. The strongest impression that he left in the course of his stay of three months, was his extraordinary ability as a tennis player. Sportsmen of the Cape haven't got over it yet. They couldn't understand how that devil of a Frenchman, arriving from beyond the seas after months of sailing, could pull out a tennis racquet from under his bunk, and, though stiff with the physical inaction of a long voyage, challenge the best players of South Africa . . . to leave them out of breath and defeated on the other side of the net!

An echo of a less distant passage was that of old Captain Harry Pidgeon who, for the second time, was going round the world alone in leisurely fashion, in spite of his 70 years of age. (I am only 46; so I have many good years ahead of me!)

He remained nearly eight months at Capetown and left there the impression of a simple and downright man, a man of the sea.

Among my numerous friends there was one whom I met nearly every evening: he was a little man with the general appearance of a retired University Professor; I had been at once surprised by discovering in his short-sighted eyes hidden behind the thick lenses of his gold spectacles a flame, a gaiety, a fantasy, together with an uncommon depth of expression. He informed me that for the moment he was a "reporter" and later he told me that he had been an ethnologist, an explorer, a farmer, a gold prospector, a gunner officer. He told me too that he preserved a touching recollection of France for whom he had fought during the war; he regretted his inability ever to return there: had he not been, some years after the Armistice, lodged free of charge in the gaol of the fort of Saint-Jean of Marseille, this for several months because he had agreed to photograph a torpedo stranded on the Sablettes beach at Toulon, at the instigation of a little Italian lady friend, of rather suspicious appearance, who accompanied him! A torpedo which happened to be of a new type! Every day I drank many whiskies and sodas with this congenial chance friend and I too confided a few things to him. Like a good journalist he could have taken advantage of my unusual loquacity to discover material for a few extra articles concerning the extraordinary adventure of the two "French catamaranists" of which the local press was full. How surprised I was a few days before our departure to hear him say:

"Will you allow me to describe the impressions of our meeting? Yes? Well! The manager of my newspaper, interested in our conversations, at any rate those I

can remember, has asked me to offer you this envelope" . . . and in the envelope was a cheque for five pounds, more than we needed to keep us in provisions for three or four months!

It was blowing hard on the day of our departure. Gusts from the south-east were descending from Table Mountain with such force that the little yacht basin was put out of bounds. From early morning motors had been lining up on the bank, opposite us, anxious to watch us weigh anchor. A few daring friends, among whom Mr. Roux, an Afrikaner of Huguenot origin and an influential member of the Government of South Africa, his wife and family, Mr. du Mesnil, President of the French Club, Mr. and Mrs. Ingram, Messrs. Inskipp and Herisson, professors at the University, were bold enough to come and greet us aboard, returning soaked to the bones; the club was swarming with spectators and, along the jetty enthusiasts ran about, who wished to watch the hoisting of our sails once we had cleared the pier.

One of the club members, with his big motor-launch, had offered us a tow for our exit, and the whole fleet of sailing yachts was to escort us . . . but the wind was too strong to permit the second part of the programme.

So the *Himenoa* came alone to get hold of us; a cinema operator had placed himself in her stern with the intention of taking us; the good fellow appeared to have certain illusions!

We weigh anchor and make for the harbour entrance; presently I feel a shock on the tiller, which is jammed. What can it be? We are dragging a little white buoy after us, which is making eddies under water. The *Himenoa* stops, a rapid inspection shows us that the rudder has caught onto the buoy rope of moorings

which the force of the wind had submerged and made invisible; we are dragging its mooring with us. I thank heaven for having a main-piece as big as a tree trunk.

Tati bravely undresses and glides over the stern into the icy water. Watching his efforts, I feel that I am going to . . . catch a cold. After a few minutes he succeeds in cutting the buoy rope; the buoy emerges, but the rudder is still jammed. The rope has got wedged between the keel and the main-piece. We pull at it first from one side then from the other without result; Tati gets into the water again, emerges purple, dives in again, and after a quarter of an hour of effort the rope consents to work loose; the *Himenoa* resumes her tow. This time the wind is blowing in savage gusts. The cinema fellow yells at us to ask if it would be possible for him to take a film with all sails set, with Table Mountain as a background. Why, of course!

At that moment a cloud of spray drenches him, together with his camera which he had so carefully fixed at starting. He wipes his lens with his handkerchief and seems in despair.

We emerge from the dock; the wind is with us: to the devil with his camera! We throw off the tow line, we hoist the jib. Merely with that bit of a pocket handkerchief the *Kaimiloa* is scudding along at a good rate.

Wishing to pass very close to the jetty where a crowd of sightseers have assembled, we hoist the mainsail with a following wind: a rather daring operation! When it gets half-way up the mast the lee-stay against which the bamboos are pressing cannot stand it. It breaks with a sharp snap. Never mind, it wasn't in very good condition. Let's go on hoisting all the same.

We are bounding along; behind us the cinema fellow, clinging with both hands to the rails of the launch in a



fit of energy, urges the owner of the yacht to catch us up; in a light breeze, perhaps, old chap, but not to-day.

We pass within 50 metres of the jetty, throwing up the white water: about 100 spectators are there—nearly all members of the Royal Yacht Club.

Sailors as they were, they felt bound to come and greet us on the threshold of the great ocean.

A vibrant acclamation reaches us in the wind: "Long live France!" Followed by three vigorous "Hip, hip, hip, hurrah!"

Our torn little French ensign is dipped, flapping frantically.

A fresh acclamation, louder still, reaches us: "Long live France!" I am so excited, as the English say, that I let go the tiller, climb on the cabin roof, wave my arms and catch myself yelling with all my might:

"Long live South America!"

But the wind is too strong. Probably they didn't notice my mistake.

What the deuce! Anybody can make a mistake. One passes so quickly from one continent to another . . . with the *Kaimiloa*!

At 4.30 p.m., doing  $8\frac{1}{2}$  knots, we round, two miles off, the lighthouse of the little island at the entrance to the bay, and changing our course with the wind on our quarter, bouncing on the swell, we plunge into the Atlantic.

## Chapter XVI

### THE ATLANTIC

20th September

FOR the last eight days we have been sailing with the wind on our quarter, a pleasant east-south-east breeze. What grand sailing! On a boat like the *Kaimiloa* there is nothing to do, nothing to do except to potter at anything that takes your fancy.

But it is vain for me to repeat that: the great majority of sailors and the totality of landsmen will remain convinced that every hour of sailing on a small boat is spent in wrestling with the elements, in a word that we are "sportsmen." A mistake! Our sole obligation for the whole day is to work the primus stove, to light it in the morning at 8 o'clock for coffee: that is Tati's job; to light it at 3 o'clock in the afternoon for the "lunch-dinner," which is the skipper's job . . . followed by washing the two plates overboard, Tati's job, and finish for the day, all clear! The rest of the time can be occupied in reading a good book, in study and research, each according to his taste, and better still in doing what many people nowadays have forgotten or are neglecting to do . . . merely "thinking."

The good trade winds which the wind chart has been promising us until we reach the Line, abandon us at this moment (latitude 23° south, longitude 3° 30' east); the sea goes flat and we are bobbing about in the midst of shoals of enormous "men of war" iridescent with all the colours of the rainbow. Several times I attempt an amusing little experiment. When tickled with the end

of a bamboo stick, these molluscs will cling to it with all their tentacles; as soon as they are put back in the water, they break away from it and from that moment nothing in the world can make them grip again and they have no further interest in the bamboo; could this living gelatine have understanding and intelligence?

24th September

Calm . . . calm. . . . What does this mean? What about the trade winds? Where are they? The wind chart from the American Hydrographic Service indicates, for this region and month, only 2 per cent calm and 98 per cent fairly fresh breeze coming from the east.

This afternoon we are rocked slowly and softly by a long deep swell coming from the west and north-west; perhaps some disturbance is taking place over there, a thing which would, in part, explain these abnormal calms! Yet the barometer has remained normal.

Later on a gentle breath reaches us from the south and south-south-east: the *Kaimiloa* begins to move again. Presently I see some big brown stains on the port bow; I steer for them: when we have arrived over them I notice with surprise that they are caused by colonies of luminous points at a depth of several metres, glistening with metallic reflections of the most varied tints, yellow, blue, green and red, as metallic and as varied as those you see on the spangled dresses of music-hall artists swaying before the footlights, having nothing in common with the usual phosphorescent life of the sea.

I blame myself for being an ignoramus, I know so very little about marine biology. It's one of my many lacunæ, to be filled in: there are so many mysterious things on the seas which wanderers like ourselves, who are in such complete contact with her, alone can observe.

What a pity that we cannot prowl for a few hours in this region, studying its currents, its temperature, the difference in saltiness perhaps, collect luminous spangles, observe them for later on, communicate my non-professional remarks to some learned specialist, who, in his turn, might perhaps lift a tiny corner of the mysterious veil. I pass by with a heavy heart, for I have the feeling that I am not doing my duty. Bah! I'll make up for it later.

It is cool, always cool; we sleep with our two blankets, that is to say, as far as my own bedding is concerned, with my blanket and a thick winter overcoat presented to me when we left Capetown by my friend the reporter.

An albatross has again come to hover around our ship (latitude at noon  $22^{\circ} 42'$ ). The breeze seems to be holding on this time!

### *30th September*

Towards 8 o'clock caught sight of the island of St. Helena straight ahead; we round it three miles to port.

Poor Napoleon! To die there after having tramped in his victorious boots over all the battlefields of Europe! I picture him, standing on the cliff, with his eyes and his thoughts straining towards the open sea. Facing the ocean that imprisoned him, how often he must have reflected that to fight the English of those days, it would have been better to have had a "grand fleet" rather than a "grand army." If that wonderful man had applied his methods to building up a navy, a real sailor's navy, and chosen his admirals as he chose his generals, he would have had no difficulty in finding a few souls of sterling worth to bring inspiration to his fleets: he would have found them among those who

have made our name for ever glorious upon the waters, our corsairs!

Clad in fine uniforms those men would not have looked too bad at court receptions, but good God of wooden ships! what a grand manner they would have had when fighting!

It is customary to call St. Helena a rock; one should not exaggerate: it is a beautiful island not lacking in picturesqueness: seen from the sea I only find it a trifle bare when compared with certain islands in the Pacific. To-night its ridges are outlined all violet in colour, against the purple sky of the setting sun. A pure sky in which are racing some little golden clouds driven by the trade wind, which get caught up by the peaks as they pass. That is all that I shall see of the historic island. No call here! In the course of a conversation on the Cape-town radio, the announcer suddenly asked me if I had any intention of stopping there. Caught unawares I answered: .

"St. Helena? Me stop at St. Helena? What do you think? Stop where you imprisoned my good friend [*sic*] the Emperor Napoleon?"

The microphone registered his reply: an unaffected burst of laughter, which didn't prevent me from being instantly aware that, for the majority of the listeners I had put my foot in it badly. The next day I heard that on the contrary everyone had found it very humorous!

Was it not barely a hundred years ago that, on a day like this, a frigate from France, the *Belle-Poule*, landed in the island to collect there as a sacred trust the ashes of the Emperor?

A fine gesture on the part of good King Louis Philippe, who, if I remember rightly, selected for that great mission, a commander who was none other than his own third son, Prince de Joinville, a commander in

the Royal Navy, who took aboard a heavy coffin draped in the glorious blue, white and red flag of the Revolution and of the Empire.

And this night, when abreast of the violet island, where no doubt the shadow of the great Emperor comes to prowl occasionally, the *Kaimiloa* doesn't wish to be behindhand with the *Belle-Poule*; Tati and I slowly, piously, hoist the three colours.

### 7th October

All these last few days I have been somewhat lazy. The weather is so fine! We have rounded Ascension Island and are now 6° south. At noon the sun is dead overhead, but I cannot make it out, we still need our two blankets at night. On the 3rd October, 12° south only, an albatross, that bird of the cold seas, was still hovering around our ship.

The clouds in the upper layers have, for the last two days, been racing at a grand pace towards the north-east; showers of rain are frequent. Probably all this weather means to rendezvous in the "Doldrums." We'll get some shower when we reach there!

Porpoises and blowers are leaping gaily round the ship near enough to touch it, so close that Tati and I, lying flat in the bows of each of the canoes, amuse ourselves by slapping them as they go by; it doesn't seem to disturb them in the least. For the last few days we have been meeting shoals of flying fish.

### 9th October

The showers of rain have ceased. The temperature has suddenly become milder. Two more days of this little breeze and we shall be under the equator; only this night were we able to sleep without blankets. The day was radiant: it looks as if the Atlantic wishes to

show us that it can be as enchanting as the Pacific. What a beautiful night of dreaming I have just spent on the deck! It is with regret that I call Tati to take over the watch: the thin crescent of the moon, sinking below the horizon with its two horns pointing towards the zenith, seemed just now to have also gone to bed regretfully. . . .

*12th October*

Crossed the Line to-night. Twenty-nine days only since we left Capetown. Not so bad, good little *Kaimiloa*! We passed it at the 16th degree a little to the east of the usual route of the great sailing vessels (which generally cut it at the 20th degree).

*14th October*

It's raining hard, and as it is fairly mild, I take the opportunity of having my first bath since we left the Cape! Hygiene means health!

*17th October*

Latitude 5° 29' N.; Longitude 18° 10' W., night and day a flat calm. You could spend all your life at sea on such days, on such nights. Once more we pull out all our clothes, we empty suit-cases, the wardrobe trunk.

"This looks like getting near France!" says Tati to me.

I look at my wardrobe without pride. Nothing much here for me to cut a figure in, it will be cold when we reach France and the overcoat of my friend the reporter, which for the last month has been fulfilling the duties of a blanket, has assumed a corkscrewy look, with a nasty pissy tint, which looks like preventing it from ever being displayed in public. I notice that I have but one pair

of worn shoes, tennis shoes at that: a bit out of season for December!

*19th October*

After a few days of fairly variable breezes, here we are back again in calm waters; from time to time some insignificant black clouds climb into the blue sky trying to look fierce, break up into little bits and disappear without warning.

Some swallows, exhausted, have just fallen aboard, two at first, then seven more. Where do they come from? Where are they going? Tati and I saw them arrive from the west, but to the west there are only the coasts of America. It's a long way!

Half dead with fatigue, they allow themselves to be picked up. Then presently regaining some strength they flutter around the ship. One of them enters the cabin and perches trustfully upon the pillow of my bunk where I am reading. I ask her gently where she comes from, she half opens one eye, looks at me out of the corner of it, and goes off again into her dream. How dainty and pretty she is with her reddish-brown wings, her throat lightly tinted with red amber!

I feel sympathy for this little creature which is crossing the oceans, doubtless because I, who am a big creature, am doing the same. Gently I repeat my question, but she, probably to punish me for my indiscretion, lifts slightly the delicate tip of her tail, and drops on a corner of my pillow a little white thing. Having thus relieved herself (and perhaps explained herself) she returns to her indifference. I take great care not to remove the little white thing, for fear of waking her up.

At sunset all those nine little creatures meet together and huddle against each other upon a bamboo of the mainsail.



At daybreak Tati says to me: "They're still there."

With the first ray of the sun, they all fly merrily round the boat, and, caught by a squall, once more come to take refuge on it; four of them have sheltered in the cabin. When the squall is over one of them, which appears to be the squadron leader, comes near the door, utters a few rallying cries and all of them in chorus, take up their flight towards the east.

*21st October*

Another bird story. This time it's a nasty bird which came and settled on the mast: a sparrow hawk with hooked beak, his head withdrawn in his feathers, ugly feathers spotted with dirty yellow and white; on seeing him clinging and running along the gaff, you feel how clever he must be with his claws. He very soon shows us. Some hours after his arrival another little swallow falls exhausted aboard. The "nasty bird" sneakily squatting at the junction of the gaff and mast, pounced upon her. He missed her. The swallow doubling back, came and rested on one of the connecting chains under the platform. Another swallow arrives, flutters about without knowing exactly where to settle; from her shelter the first warns her by little cries of the presence of the villain, lying in wait up the mast.

From the cabin I heard presently cries of distress.

"You heard," says Tati, "here, just look at that filthy creature, he's got her in his claws!"

To be sure the sparrow-hawk is flying with his prey; but not knowing where to settle to complete his bad deed, he tries to come back aboard.

"Quick, Tati, a stick!"

In a few seconds my mate has pulled out an enormous bamboo. At the very moment that the bird of prey is about to settle on the cabin roof, Tati deals him a blow

fit to knock the bottom out of the boat; he only touches one wing but that wing is in pulp: the bird and its victim fall into the sea. The swallow, freed, flies a few metres and falls down again. The sparrow-hawk is struggling on the water, unable to take off. He is done for. I should like to steer for the little creature to fish her out, but we're in a flat calm; she is going to drown. She makes a last effort, flies 100 metres or so and falls again, but this time ahead of the boat. At that moment, a little puff fills the sail; I steer for the little creature, and Tati picks her up delicately as we pass by. We dry her, we nurse her and, while delicately dabbing under her wings, I notice some blood. We place her in a corner of the cabin, upon some cotton wool.

At 4 o'clock in the morning, Tati wakes me; he's got on a funereal face.

"She's dead," says he to me.

Not remembering, I say to him:

"Who is dead?"

"The swallow! We won't fling her overboard at once, will we, Captain? . . . I want to arrange a little wake for her."

### 22nd October

This *Kaimiloa* is no longer a sailing vessel, she's an aviary; this morning there came aboard a lively little chaffinch. What has he come so far out to sea for? He doesn't appear to be in the least tired, and he's so very familiar! He rests on our shoulders, our heads, giving us little pecks, and seems to be sorry that we haven't any lice to offer him. He consoles himself by skilfully hunting for our rare cockroaches in our star-board cabin, but after a few minutes of this the cockroaches, scenting an enemy, disappear. So much so that Tati, trying to find one to offer to the bird for his

breakfast, is furious because he can't lay his hand on one.

The confidence which this tiny little creature shows in us is touching. How charming life would be if we could always live in harmony with the life that surrounds us. (With animals at any rate, since with men it seems to be so difficult.) Besides why are these birds so familiar here, at sea, when one can't approach them on land? Perhaps they know that a sailor's soul . . . but no, since there are brutes also among sailors. I rather think that they sense the feelings of the human beings they approach. I would very much like this pretty little chaffinch to stay for ever aboard.

He spent the whole night in the cabin, on a corner of my bookshelf, sleeping most trustfully with his head huddled inside his yellow feathers. He started to sing at sunrise, says Tati, and took a turn or two round the boat to loosen his wings, then started again to hunt for cockroaches. I managed at last to find one for him in the bilge, under the flooring—a big one. What a treat! He flung himself on it and nearly strangled himself with one of the jagged legs. I cut up the insect into little pieces. A few minutes later all there is left are two bits of the wings.

Then, with his belly full, off he goes: Tati and I don't see him fly away—the ungrateful wretch! Not even a little parting song.

### *1st November*

All these last few days there have been variable breezes, interspersed with calm. Fine sailing! We are abreast of Conakry, 150 miles off. We haul off gently towards Cape Verde Islands.

For some days the sea has been swarming with big red tunny, which are restlessly chasing the flying fish and a kind of cuttle-fish that also flies, I wonder by what

means. Until now I had thought that they could only manage to leave the water under the sudden impulse given them by expelling air, but now I see some of them, much like flying fish, change the direction of their flight merely by grazing the water.

The somersaults and long jumps of the tunny are incredible and I don't think I am exaggerating when I say that I have registered leaps 7 metres in height and 25 to 30 metres in length. These enormous fish swim more swiftly than the flying fish can fly, they chase them by bounding out of the water behind them, and often manage to gobble them down while flying.

To-day the weather is unpleasant and grey, regular All Saints' Day weather. Why is everything generally sad on that day? Merely, I think, because a number of the living, who never think of their dead during the year, imagine that on this particular date they must put on a funereal face and show a tortured heart. And they manage to do it, worse luck, they see everything in dark colours!

And so what certain "savages" taught me is perhaps true, that if grey weather can give rise to dark thoughts, dark thoughts may also give rise to grey weather, that we react more than we think on the physical world by our thoughts! We are nearing Cape Verde Islands. There are probably cemeteries there and good people dressed in black are groaning: "Ah! The dear deceased! Such a saintly woman!"

To-night the wind drops suddenly. We must be in the lee of the islands.

*2nd November*

At daybreak Tati wakes me.

We are near land and we seem to be drifting towards it. Brava Island, the southernmost of the Cape Verde

Islands, is there, three miles off, rugged, arid, barely visible under the veil of morning mist.

Her more important neighbour, that should be rearing a peak over 1,000 metres in height towards the sky, is invisible; only the big volutes of clouds towering over the bank of fog have caught on to its peaks to prove to us that it is indeed there.

There is a boat in sight, the first one since we left Capetown a month and a half ago.

I call Tati: "A three-master on the horizon!" My mate, who is in the cabin, bursts out laughing:

"You're kidding me," he shouts back.

Never in his life has he seen a square-rigger out at sea. It has always been his dream to come across one.

I had promised him that pleasure, chancing it, taking a good deal upon myself, for these square-riggers, the pride of our sailors and the noble adornments of the seas, have almost entirely disappeared. There still are some half score of them, nearly all flying the Norwegian flag; they are carrying on the great tradition of the grain races from Australia. It is indeed a square-rigger that I see over there, yet not one of the ten survivors of the great days! Besides, what would she be doing, prowling round these islands? This one is making towards the south, with all sail set, with yards squared; a few miles from us, she reaches our belt of flat calm, is no longer steering, is starting to make circles on the water. Down come her sails, royals, top-gallants, topsails. Black dots are running along the yards. Then a cloud of smoke surrounds her stern. She has a motor, up to date after all. . . . At once it seems to me, as I watch her taking on her course again under bare yards, that she has lost all her poesy; all the same, on watching her hauling off from the calm of this flat sea I can't help feeling a pang of jealousy.

She is drawing nearer: a pretty barque with a white hull pierced with several rows of port-holes. Nothing of the long-distance grain-ships about her. Moreover, the sails were stowed away at great speed, they must have a big crew aboard. A training ship perhaps?

We hoist our flag, she hoists hers.

We salute one another but we shall never know to which country either of us is proud to belong, for our colours haven't the strength to spread themselves out into the sky. She passes a mile from us, and two hours later we see her behind the horizon re-hoisting her royals, and with sails reset, following a course towards the south with wind on the quarter. Her motor got her out of the calm belt! We are still in it and under a fiery sky, swaying lazily to the swell.

An unpleasant night. Taking advantage of the slightest breath, we too have had to make for the south again, from which we had come, to pick up the north-east wind behind the screen of the islands.

### *3rd November*

The whole night and the whole morning to cover 15 miles to the south! It is 3 o'clock in the afternoon; at last, we too emerge from the calm belt. We are now going at a fine pace, pointing north-west.

### AT SEA

Since we left Cape Verde Islands I have not put a word down in my diary, at most a few notes in conventional language, on odd corners of my notebooks! Why? Because, for the first time for six years, I too am fed up! Fed up!!!

Since we left Cape Verde Islands, nothing has been going right: bad luck takes us when both are at the end of our tether. The crisis began on the 23rd November.

The day before, we met two steamers going south, the *Frisco*, an Italian and the *Cédania*, a German; they had both asked us where we were going, where we came from, were we needing anything. We had been becalmed for two days. Weather very fine. Why were we nervy?

On the 23rd in the morning a four-master showed up on the horizon, under reduced canvas; she was going our way, or rather, becalmed as we were, she was remaining on the same spot, like ourselves.

Presently she changed course and pointed towards us: she too had a motor; on drawing near she hoisted her ensign: red, with a black swastika on a white background: German; we are going to hoist ours!

At that moment I crack a joke, a very innocent one. Looking through my field-glasses, I say to Tati:

"Ooh! there are lots of people on board. Hullo, I see a woman, a pretty blonde woman!"

Immediately I see Tati's face fall to pieces, he looks at me with insane eyes. Yet I hadn't said anything very extraordinary.

"Captain, why, why will you always be teasing me? Do you want to exasperate me?"

(I don't understand.)

"Yes, there is a woman aboard! There is a woman aboard! You say that because you want me to go and pull on a pair of trousers."

I understand less and less. I cannot help smiling.

Then I see my pal, as if seized with a fit of nerves, fall full length upon the platform, weeping, weeping, banging his head hard against the planks and shouting:

"I beg of you, don't laugh! I can't stick it! I can't stick it! Oh! Saint Anne, let it come to an end! . . . to an end! . . . I beseech you! If not I throw myself overboard."

I am impressed by this. I try to cheer him up: why this so violent and so sudden crisis? Doubtless he has taken too much upon himself for weeks past, he is exhausted; I can see no logical explanation for this collapse.

But the four-master is approaching. She is almost upon us.

Tati gets up. We are so upset, both by the painful scene which has just occurred and by the majesty of that great sailing vessel about to pass within a few metres of us, that we forget to hoist our ensign.

The Captain hails us in French from the poop deck:

"Are you the people from Honolulu?"

"Yes!" (How can he know this? Probably by radio from the German cargo boat *Cédania* which we met yesterday.)

"Hurrah!" he shouts.

She passes alongside of us a few metres away, she is a training ship: cadets are standing in lines along the quarter-deck.

The Captain continues:

"Where are you going?"

"To France!"

"We wish you a pleasant journey!"

At that moment the cadets respond to a word of command with a hip! hip! hurrah! that makes us shudder with pleasure.

We want to salute, when we notice that we haven't got our flag; I run to fetch it; I bend it on the halliard, when a long blast on the whistle reaches us from the four-master; surprised and perturbed, I see the German ensign, taking the lead of us, being hauled down slowly, saluting the little French boat three times.

I howl:

"Long live the German Navy!"



And the cadets roar back: "*Hurrah, Frankreich!*"

In our emotion Tati and I have forgotten the painful scene of a while ago.

Gradually the sailing vessel *Commodore Johnsen* moves away. Gradually too Tati's face puts on its sombre mask. He will get over it, think I, after a good night!

As a matter of fact, the next day, Tati is calm, or at any rate, seems to be calm: he informs me almost gaily, as he calls me to come on watch, that there is another steamer on the horizon, steering towards us.

"Shall we play a trick on her?" I ask in a bantering tone.

"What trick?"

"Well, something like this. Each of us will stay in one of the boats. We shall see her coming, she won't see us and then we will watch her reactions on seeing such a queer boat with nobody aboard."

The steamer draws near: a pretty liner! I can read her name, *Cottica*. She is flying no flag, but by her lines she is a hundred per cent Dutch.

She stops ahead of us and is about to move down our starboard side. The gangway is packed with spectators: the passengers are hustling one another on the rails of the promenade decks: we don't budge, she is 20 metres away from us!

Suddenly, rending the air, a formidable blast on the siren.

Then we both emerge from our boats, bronzed, barely clad, with hairy beards. This apparition seems to astonish them.

I hail the Commander, saluting him with a gesture.

"Hullo, baby! You need something?"

Does the joke appeal to him? I don't think it does. Through his megaphone he asks:

"Where do you come from?"

"From Honolulu!" He makes me repeat this. Behold two poor lunatics, thinks he, fresh victims of the sea!

I repeat:

"From Honolulu: by way of Australia, the Indian Ocean, the Cape of Good Hope."

Still he doesn't reply.

Carried along by her way, the liner has drifted off a little; he sets the engines going, makes a circle and returns.

He is almost going to ram us; passengers on the promenade decks become more and more numerous, this time with cameras.

The Commander shouts again.

What does he say? This time it is I who am flabbergasted.

He is asking:

"Are you in distress?"

That's a good one, that is. Do we look as if we are in distress?

I reply:

"Not a bit! Not at present. We are making for Madeira and France. That is to say we shall when there's any wind!"

He doesn't reply. He forgets to start his engines; when he remembers, we salute him. He forgets to reply, he has even forgotten to hoist his colours.

I would be glad to know the impressions of the skipper of this *Cottica* on the day he met the *Kaimiloa*.

Tati's face, for a moment lit up by this little diversion, once more recovers its sombre appearance. More and more sombre as the days go by!

We no longer exchange a single word.

His eyes avoid mine more and more: this is intolerable! Gradually I cease looking at his eyes, so as not to see them avoiding mine; little by little even, I avoid looking at my comrade; to look at him even from behind, hurts me!

I too feel that this voyage must come to an end, and that as quickly as possible!

As soon as he comes on deck, I go down and read in my bunk; as soon as he stretches himself in his bunk I go and sit on the deck, forward for preference, as far from him as possible.

Yet he too must be struggling against the blues, against despair, for in the evening, as soon as the sun sets, he goes as usual to kneel in the stern of the port boat and says his prayers. Often, as he came up on deck, I have seen him making the sign of the cross with his eyes raised towards heaven, imploring. . . . Poor devil! If only he can preserve his faith in Saint Anne.

Each time I pretend not to notice.

After all, why has he never been able to resist saying his prayers secretly? Is he afraid that I shall smile at him? If so he doesn't know me! If he knew that I too say my prayers, and not only at night; you cannot help praying at sea. Everyone feels the need of raising his soul towards God, at sea. The notion that we have of God may be different sometimes, that is all.

If the nights were not there to help me pull myself together, I feel that I too could not stick it out; at night, shut in the port cabin, with my computations, my thoughts, and their refreshing atmosphere of solitude.

Ah! how well I understand the Slocums, the Gerbaults, the Pidgeons and so many others; they sailed alone, they did!

Tati is very fond of me, he would let himself be cut to pieces for me; I am very fond of him and I would

let myself be cut to pieces for him, but he has never been my friend, will never be able to be my friend, and I shall never be his. Why? Because all the time we are both living on different planes. We have not the same aims, we "feel" differently.

Each will always make the other suffer, the while wishing him all the good in the world!

All these years he has suffered more than I have, for I often manage to isolate myself within my egoism, to forget him, and that cheers me up; but then he feels that I am isolating myself and that is what he can least bear!

Good God! Let this voyage end as quickly as possible!

Ill luck is pursuing us. This is bound to happen when one is as low spirited as we are!

The wind is playing with us, tricking us . . . and how!

On leaving Capetown, I had decided to put in at Madeira; I sailed well up into the west for that purpose, so as to drop on to the island with the help of northerly winds. Nothing doing! Instead of favourable northerly winds, we have to tack about for ten days with nasty easterly breezes.

Then I make up my mind to sail further north, to call in at the Azores, in order to spend Christmas and New Year's Day there (that will do Tati a bit of good, I think). Nothing doing! Just as we are about to make a landfall at Punta Delgada, we fall in with a series of westerly winds dead ahead!

Sick of it, we agree to bear away for the coast of Portugal.

We are now steering for the entrance to the Tagus.

Tati has been better since yesterday; he has poured out a new confession: he explains to me that what had brought him so low was a notion which he had got into his head when we left Capetown, that he would spend

New Year's Day in Brittany at Trinité-sur-Mer, with his old mother; that now, understanding that it's no go, he has resigned himself to it. After all it hasn't ended too badly: to-morrow we shall be in Lisbon.

It will be none too soon either; since the 20th December, in the way of food we have only had five packets of ship's biscuits, some rice, a bottle of oil . . . plus half a litre of paraffin for the primus and lamps!

Fortunately my relations with Tati are much improved. Without a lamp in the port boat at night so that I could read, amuse myself, isolate myself, forget, I couldn't have stood it!

Yesterday we drank our last mouthful of water (for the last two days we have been cooking our rice in salt water. It makes you thirsty, this does!).

### 30th December

We make a landfall by the lights at the entrance to the Tagus; ill luck has not deserted us, the weather spoils, and the breeze, suddenly veering to the east, begins to blow a hurricane.

Obviously the gods don't wish the *Kaimiloa* to anchor among the Portuguese: Madeira, the Azores, Lisbon. There is nothing to be done about it! "Magellan, what did you do in the Pacific? I would so much have liked the *Kaimiloa* to return your visit. Her gods don't seem to want it: you must have left a bad memory yonder?"

We try to anchor a few miles off the Tagus, to the south in the Setubal roadstead. And ill luck pursues us there too: a sea is raging and the wind is freshening from the north.

I consider the position: are we going to remain hove to near land, to wait until things calm down, or else carry on with a following wind along the coast, making for Gibraltar and Tangier? During the night we decide

for the second alternative. Moreover, Tangier was the port of call selected when we left Honolulu. People will know there as well as anywhere, whether the Spaniards are still revolutionizing and whether they drop bombs on suspicious-looking boats. From high up we might look to them like an engine of war!

We eat the crackers: the rice cooked with salt water makes us feel sick; we are thirsty, but as the weather is cool, we can hold out; all the same it mustn't last too long. Our saliva is getting very thick in our mouths; these crackers are not bad. I have found an excellent way of preparing them: you dip them in salt water, which makes them swell a little, then you half cook them in a little oil, in the frying pan . . . but that mustn't last too long either; I am smoking tea leaves; the last tea we drank and which I was wise enough to preserve and to dry, I mix with green tea and roll the whole thing in a piece of newspaper. Fortunately we have still three boxes of matches aboard, for these fag ends have to be relit ten times on end.

Queer situation! No more water! No more food! No more tobacco! And all these ships that are passing us and overtaking us! What a lot of boats there are on this coast!

### 1st January

Ah! What a beastly 1st January! Yet the weather is fine, and we are getting there. Just now abeam of St. Vincent, there passed near us a Dutch steamer, the *Haulerick*. I can see the Captain very excited on his bridge, waving his arms. . . . He has a pink face, red rather; he surely has just lunched well. He is the first to salute us with his flag, and backs his salute with three long blasts on the siren.

We might stop him, ask him for food, for a good

bottle perhaps to celebrate this New Year's Day. He would have done it with pleasure. But no, we pass on. We have never asked anybody for charity and it isn't to-day that we are going to begin. We shall die if we have to, but with dignity! To feel oneself so near the land, so near one's goal, helps us a good deal to this decision.

We have passed St. Vincent. The pleasant north-north-east breeze is dropping . . . calm . . . towards evening the breeze freshens again from the north-east, passes to the east-north-east and is soon blowing a hurricane.

We are about 30 miles to the south 30° east of St. Vincent. This I think is one of the hardest seas that we have encountered, short and steep. At 2 o'clock in the morning we lower sail and remain hove to.

Tati's morale (what a strange nature) is perfect to-day. We have a long talk in the cabin, whilst the waves are hammering the hulls. He endeavours, as he says, to see clearly within himself, to explain to himself his own conduct. The same question occurs to him. How is it that hating the sea and above all this kind of sailing, he has stuck to it? He would like to know; I must help him to see clearly! He reminds me that I had offered in Honolulu to reimburse the money he had lent me for the construction of the *Kaimiloa*, and that he had begged me all the same to keep him with me, yet he had no confidence in the boat. Then why? Why?

We talked the whole night but without any result; no fresh light has been thrown that might satisfy him. Moreover, I only help him very cautiously with his "analysis."

Neither of us can sleep. A few more miles and we shall be at Tangier. The gate to the Mediterranean—France almost!

*2nd January*

At 9 o'clock in the morning, when the wind and the sea appear to be going down, a formidable shock shakes the *Kaimiloa*. I half open the cabin door to see the door of the opposite boat . . . wide open.

"Did you leave the door of the other boat open?" I ask Tati.

He thinks I am teasing again; I jump on to the platform and see the disaster: there is no door, a wave has just smashed it in. For the last few days it had only held very badly by the bottom. The wave caught it out of plumb and smashed it to pieces. There is a ton of water in the cabin; the floorboards are floating! Never mind, our morale is good, in a few minutes, bits of sail cloth are nailed on, reinforced from the inside by bits of planking to block up the opening. A space is left open at the top to enable us to bale out the water that is splashing within: no losing of heads! No swear words! An hour later all is patched up . . . provisionally. If nothing hits us between here and Tangier, it'll hold together!

A squall falls upon us, a hail storm. A windfall! We fill two buckets with hailstones, and shove them into our mouths!

*3rd January*

Are steering a course E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  NE. to pick up the track of the St. Vincent-Gibraltar steamers.

A pleasant breeze, north-west, west-north-west. The second time only since we left Cape Verde that the wind has been blowing from that direction. What a lot of steamers there are in these regions!

We are crawling between the coast of Europe and the coast of Africa; it is daybreak, a rosy and gay dawn. Tangier is over there, a few miles away, but there's no wind.



Only at night can we approach and enter the roadstead; we keep our eyes skinned, for of course I have no chart; we pass close enough to touch it, a large jetty which we hadn't seen, we sail past several warships at their moorings and drop our anchor haphazard, as soon as we find the right depth. We fall asleep like animals.

*4th January*

I wake up with a start, it is still night.

I can hear Tati having an "explanation" with a boat that is tossing alongside our own.

A grumpy voice is asking:

"What are you doing here, without lights?"

It's true! We anchored and we didn't hoist our riding lights, we couldn't hoist them.

"We can't," replies Tati in French; "we have no more paraffin."

"What, are you French?"

"Yes, Breton!" replies Tati.

"Why on earth didn't you say so?" continues the voice suddenly softened down.

"Where do you come from?"

"From Capetown!"

There is a silence.

"You know I nearly cut you in two just now, when I was bringing in a Peninsular liner, I just had time to make full speed astern with both propellers, my stem stopped within 10 metres of you. You must change your anchorage; you are in the fairway!"

A few minutes later the Harbour Master, for it was he, is towing us within a well-sheltered little bay; then, as day is breaking, he takes us with him to the Harbour Office.

Presently we are facing two good loaves of bread, a roll of sausage . . . a good bottle of white wine, some

good coffee, for they have just urgently awakened the Arab round the corner.

But above all we find ourselves face to face with a friend, a true friend, this sailor: the Harbour Master: Maria!

\* \* \*

Tangier the White. I only wanted to put in a few days here. I meet a war comrade: François de Pierrefeu. His life has followed a different course from mine; but our aspirations have remained the same. I fling myself into his arms.

"You have got to stay here," he says to me. "Come and put up at my house; write your book, put your notes in order, and only arrive in France when everything is ready." I follow his advice.

He organizes a lecture for me, so that I may make a few pennies; the French Minister, M. Avonde Froment, is kind enough to do me the honour of taking the responsibility of presiding: the *Kaimiloo* has not yet been recognized as French! But the flag which I hoisted on our departure from Honolulu, is, I think, owing to this gesture, about to receive its first official approval; the little ship is making out her own naturalization papers.

I remain four months in Tangier. Four well-filled months; but the unforeseen events of land adventures can be of but little interest in the history of the *Kaimiloo*. But at the time of our arrival something happened which greatly interested the skipper of the *Kaimiloo*, the receiving of a cable from Honolulu announcing the coming of Papaleiaiaina.

## Chapter XVII

### THE MEDITERRANEAN

*Tangier, 8th May*

**T**HIS is the day fixed for our departure!

At daybreak, as I pull aside the curtains of my room, I see with satisfaction that the clouds are driving from the west. By the way it is only for the last three days that the clouds have been driving from the west over the sky of Tangier; in fact, from the day when I decided to weigh anchor for the last stage; that seems to me to be a good augury.

"The cast wind has been blowing down the Straits of Gibraltar for the last four months, a thing that has never been known before," the Harbour Master would repeat every day, and every day I would confidently answer:

"It'll change when the *Kaimiloa* comes to weigh anchor, for she needs good westerly winds to clear the coasts of Spain and their perils. Believe me! I have an idea that the gods of the Pacific, who are, as everybody knows, the most powerful, have something to say about the control of the Atlantic."

I get aboard; Tati has already hoisted our new French flag, a bit larger than the old one, of a blue, white and red that sings merrily in the breeze; it is a present from the commander of the destroyer *Forbin*.

I am not very fond of "scrounging," as they say in Marseille, but all the same, now that it seems that we can hoist officially our French colours, we couldn't decently arrive home with our old ensign, the one we had when we left Honolulu. It had become too shabby;

according to our custom we hadn't hauled it down from the masthead at each port of call, and our stay in Tangier has lasted just four months. The east wind has carried away all the red, leaving only a bit of the edge, has shredded away half the white, the other half of which has become an isabel colour . . . not very catholic; and has torn into a portion of the blue, which has become black.

That beautiful new ensign shall flap proudly in the sky. Right! But the other can't lose its place of honour: it is the flag which, washed and repaired yesterday, shall fly over the *Kaimiloa* when she arrives in France. It has taken on a second youth. First of all I holystoned it, then finding in the office of the hotel an old disused Union Jack, I painfully unsewed the strips of bunting, which more expert hands than mine have since placed end to end; seen from a distance, it again looks a bit like a French flag, a French flag combined with the Union Jack. What a symbol! Long live the Entente Cordiale!

As soon as they heard of our departure in the town, everyone asked us the same question:

"Have you repaired your boat?" Invariably I replied: "No!"

For there was no need to recondition our *Kaimiloa*; apart from a dab of paint due on arriving, a quick scraping of the copper sheeting of the two hulls, nothing! Some "mariners" will perhaps be surprised at our carelessness when they learn that we hadn't even inspected the smallest bit of rope, that we hadn't cast a glance at the condition of the mainsail, which has been bent on for nearly two years, holding out stoutly in spite of the burning sun and the mildewing rains! Yes, for nearly two years the canvas of this mainsail has not seen a palm, has not received a single prick from the needle!

In spite of this conclusive experience, it does not prevent amateur yachtsmen and "steam" sailors exclaiming: "What a funny idea, don't you think, to have used these 'Chinese' sails?"

Tati is already aboard, impatient to be off. Yesterday I thought we should have to put off our departure, for my mate had for the last two days been tortured with violent fits of colic. Contrary to what the malicious might think, this is in no way caused by the idea of having to return to sea. On the contrary that idea had the opposite effect, and he informed me proudly last night that everything was normal again.

Our sole preparations for weighing anchor consist in taking aboard provisions, and in freeing the anchor which we had laid as a precaution, and the chain of *which after four months of swinging in every direction*, has made numerous turns round our moorings.

Our good mariner friend, the Harbour Master, foreseeing our difficulties, immediately sends us a lighter provided with a powerful winch, and four Arabs at the crank soon hoist up the chain, the anchor, the mooring and, to complicate everything, an immense rusty grapnel, which might well have belonged to a Phœnician galley.

As we have nothing more to do but hoist our sails, we leave our ship, to take our last meal ashore with a few friends.

Tati and I were keen on having this farewell lunch in a little restaurant opposite the Tangier-Fez Station, where, with starving bellies, we had had our first dinner on the evening of our arrival. What a dinner that had been, heavens! we shall long remember it! The proprietors had looked after us particularly well and we had been gorging savagely like seagulls without a thought

that our stomachs for the last eight days at sea had had only rice cooked in salt water, a few biscuits soaked in salt water and toasted in a remnant of rancid coconut oil!

So much so that before the end of the meal, my entrails rebelled and I had been obliged to leave the table suddenly; but scarcely had I taken refuge in the . . . little place, when I saw the door shaken fit to break under repeated punches:

"Open, Captain, open!"

"But, but I am in here!" I had replied.

"For the love of God, open! I can't hold out any more!"

And the bolt drawn, there showed up a Tati, pale, discomposed, who in a voice from beyond the grave, said to me:

"Oh! my God, all this good dinner! It won't go down; it's still on my stomach; I'm going to be sick!" I only just had time to get away.

Our farewell lunch has not in any way resembled that arrival dinner. Having washed it down to perfection, determined to digest it properly this time, life seems light and beautiful! On the Yacht Club wharf there are a few friends and spectators to shake our hands for the last time; the last wishes for a pleasant journey, a few signatures, and many clickings of cameras.

Upon the roadstead, the *Kaimiloa* is already invaded. I notice a fine uniform gleaming with gold braid and decorations. It is the congenial Commander of the *Basque*, Lieutenant-Commander Kerzoncuff, who received us in such a naval fashion when we arrived, and whose torpedo-boat is once more guarding the roadstead; he at once informs me that his display of medals has not been brought out in my honour, and that if he is "showing everything" it's simply on account of

Joan of Arc, whose fête day it happens to be today.

I am deeply touched to see at his side M. Avonde Froment, the French Minister, and his charming wife. The *Kaimiloa* appears to be more honoured on her departure than on her arrival!

The hour for weighing anchor has struck. Our distinguished visitors get aboard the torpedo-boat's launch from which they are to watch a few evolutions of the Polynesian double canoc.

There only remain aboard my very dear war comrade whom I have found again: François de Pierrefeu; a young friend of sixteen, Bob de Muns, the son of a Spanish Ambassador, a refugee at Tangier, and Papaleiaiaina.

All three will be present while we carry out some going about in the roadstead; we have agreed to do this to enable the Tourists Syndicate of Morocco to take a coloured film.

Papaleiaiaina, faithful to the pretty traditional custom of the Hawaiian Islands, flings over our shoulders the leis of departure, and, still wearing our garlands of flowers, we cast off our moorings.

Hoist jib, foresail! The *Kaimiloa* swings round! Hoist mainsail! The *Kaimiloa* gets away in style towards the exit of the small harbour. Pierrefeu stares intently at this boat which is steering herself, and his true sailor's soul seems to vibrate anew to a fresh appeal from the "distant horizon"; Papaleiaiaina doubtless visualizes another departure, the original one, the anchor weighing of the *Kaimiloa* at Honolulu, before three thousand spectators hustling one another upon the quays to have a last look at the strange double canoe, condemned by nautical experts, and at the two madmen who were

sailing to a watery death, whilst young de Muns, with his soul open to the breath of adventure, seems to be living "the great hour of his life!"

We cross a steamer that is entering the roadstead: our friend Maria, who is combining the functions of pilot with those of Harbour Master, waves us a grand farewell from his bridge, and through his megaphone shouts his wishes for a pleasant voyage.

We pass the stern of the *Basque* near enough to touch it, who gallantly replies to our salute by leaving her ensign lowered longer than is customary; we "disembark" into the torpedo-boat's launch our three last-minute passengers, and saluting the land for the last time, stand in for the Straits.

A quarter of an hour later I notice a motor-launch racing after us, going full speed ahead in a cloud of spray; I heave to! It's Maria!

He boards us, holds out his hand:

"As soon as I had anchored my cargo boat I couldn't resist it," he says to me. "I ran after you. I simply had to shake your hand!"

Good friend. . . . Good sailor's heart; if he had to say farewell to his friends, he owed it to himself to say it at sea!

A good westerly breeze is blowing with occasional small clouds of fine rain.

Come, plucky *Kaimiloa*, one more little effort! There only remains a little duck pond to traverse, and over there, on the other side, is France!

### 9th May

During the whole night, a strong westerly breeze: if only it would last! Tati, not to break his habit after a prolonged stay ashore, is seasick, not so much though as when we left Honolulu.



What a lot of steamers there are coming and going through this Strait of Gibraltar. To-night we pass in the midst of them, unseen, for, according to our wise custom, and contrary to established rules, we are sailing with all lights out.

Yet, just now I showed a light, and I swear I'll never again do such a foolish thing. We were on the port tack with a quarter wind, a steamer ahead, slightly starboard, was making straight for us. The moon shone clearly at times between two clouds; fearing lest this boat might sight me in the darkness and at the last moment carry out an idiotic manoeuvre in order to avoid me, I decided to show a light. A great mistake on my part. On seeing this light, dead ahead, the officer on the watch, surprised, realizing that he is facing a sailing vessel, but probably unaware of the direction of the wind, stupidly brings his big tub to starboard, right across our course. At first I think the steersman is yawing, but no. In my turn I have to starboard the helm, more and more to starboard, at the risk of gybing dangerously, and thus giving a death blow to the weak bamboos of my mainsail. We only just miss her, and I pass, with a little shudder, within a few metres of an enormous stern, like a wall, where an idiotic screw, half out of the water, is flock-flocking! I couldn't help yelling at the officer on the watch the worst insult in my sailor's vocabulary:

"Garn! You . . . soldier!"

This morning we sight the coast of Spain, somewhat hazy in a white sky. How harsh is nature there! God! what a nasty character one must develop when one has to live upon such an arid coast. If at any time I were forced to set up house in such a place and if I couldn't find, as appears to be the case, a tree big enough to make the semblance of a boat from, to enable me to get

away, I think that I too should be doing a bit of revolutionizing.

To-day our cuisine is simplified: we simply do not eat! Tati's stomach is still out of order: I take advantage of this to have a day's fasting. One always needs that after four months of shore cuisine. We cover 140 miles during these first twenty-four hours; if only this could last! We should beat another record!

### 10th May

Tati is better. We are still off the coast of Spain, well away as prudence dictates. Abcam of Cape Gata, so my comrade told me this morning, some searchlights swept the sea, and for a moment seemed to be resting on us. No tricks, please!

To-day a good dish of noodles *à la Kaimiloa*, washed down with a good bottle of white wine—quite high living, in a word! I am pleased to know that my hand has not lost its cunning; to-morrow I shall prepare some rice. The day after to-morrow noodles, and so on until we get to France. What's the good of varying our menus so long as we eat with a good appetite? How people complicate their lives ashore: hors-d'œuvre, dish upon dish, and dessert which one doesn't always eat with an appetite . . . and then a lot of washing-up afterwards.

It is still blowing a gale. It is delightful to see ourselves thus forging ahead towards France! One thing surprises me: nothing gives way in the rigging!

### 11th May

The sea is pretty high from the west with a tendency to go down; sky clear: shall I see the P. & O. *Ranchi* which must have left Tangier yesterday? There are eyes on her that must be scouring the horizon, trying to

make out the indented silhouette of a craft with bamboos; straightway I take a sight to make sure I am on the steamer route from Gibraltar to the east of the Balearics.

### 12th May

Calm most of the night. A pity, we had done so well until now: we are going to lose our fine average of 140 miles a day. We console ourselves by taking our first sun bathe. Three big turtles are sleeping on the surface a few metres from us; we try to draw near; Tati dives in . . . so do the turtles!

A big liner of 25,000 tons at least passes close to us: she is an Italian, the *Giuglio Cesare*, all white with two yellow funnels: we drift into her wake: orange peel, squeezed lemons, empty bottles, odd boxes, salad leaves, cigarette boxes. Among the latter I recognize several of a South African brand which I used to smoke during our crossing of the Atlantic; this liner must be coming from Capetown. On seeing all this rubbish which the liner is leaving in her wake I think of the tragic hours on the *Fou Po*. We had, when dying of hunger, passed the *Tayo Maru* going from San Francisco to Honolulu, and she hadn't understood our distress signals; at day-break our barely opened eyes had scrutinized the surface of the water in the hope of discovering a few scraps . . . but not the tiniest lettuce leaf!

If we had found such a wake as this what a blessing it would have been! We could have lasted a week longer.

### 13th May

We are still on the steamer track; to-day comes a cargo boat, but what a cargo boat! Of a type foreign to us for six years: it's a French one!

Yes here's the first boat from home that we have met

at sea during years and years of sailing on the *Fou Po* and the *Kaimiloa*. The *Leopold L. Dreyfus* we had seen at Capetown, was in the harbour. Enough to make you think that we were the only ones from home to be still scouring the seas!

This particular boat slows down, passes near enough to touch us, and her skipper hails us:

"Do you need anything?"

"No thanks! Will you kindly signal our passage. All well aboard . . . making for Cannes!"

She is the *Normanville* from Havre; a group of sailors in her stern shout: "Long live France!" Who was it telling me that we French people have lost our proud spirit? The little cargo boat moves away saluting us.

#### 14th May

The breeze has just risen from the north-east, rather feeble, dead ahead; so we must give up rounding the great Balcaric, Majorca, by the south and east. What's to be done? Tack about without getting too near those Spanish territories which I have been told are dangerous, in the hope of a change in the wind? Not on your life: to the devil with the Spaniards, their revolution and above all the counsels of prudence bestowed on me when I left Tangier. Let us take advantage of these north-easterly breezes to pass between Majorca and Minorca. After that we shall see!

We soon make out the little islet detached from this southern point of Majorca; we shape a course round it, keeping it on the beam ten miles off (let's be prudent all the same). The approach to the land is well guarded: at 10 o'clock this morning we hear the roar of a motor. Is it a submarine or a 'plane? In vain we search the sky and the sea. It is only half an hour later that there come upon us, to leeward, from the south a

squadron of three hydroplanes skimming the surface. They make for us. We are a little anxious; I hope they won't amuse themselves "laying" a few bombs! People are so savage in our civilized countries!

The three machines pass near enough to touch us (we hoist our ensign) and are off again continuing their course towards the north-north-west. Nice people these Spaniards! But were they Spaniards? Italians or Germans perhaps? Nice people all the same!

By the way to whom do these Balearics belong? Some say to the "Reds," others to the "Whites." I ought perhaps to have asked before we left. Red or White, it's all the same to me, both equally rotten! One side has the power and wishes to keep it; the other hasn't got it and would like to take it; both finding good reasons for it and each finding the other's reasons inadequate.

We enter the Strait at a fine pace; on the horizon, dead ahead, I notice a small trawler; can it be a patrol boat? No tricks, please! Let her leave us in peace!

I indulge in a light siesta, but at 4 o'clock Tati calls me up on deck: a sailing vessel, a little three-masted schooner, with all sails furled is making for us under power. I glance at her through the glasses, curse it! She has a little gun on her forecastle: she is a patrol boat! Why is she chasing us? Her intentions cannot be too bad since she is neither hoisting a signal nor firing a shot to stop us. She gradually catches us up, passes within ten metres to starboard; the whole crew is there, looking on as if petrified; I wave my arm, Tati waves an arm, all the Spaniards wave their arms. It seems that all is well!

"Where do you come from?" the Captain shouts to me in French through his megaphone.

"*Dé la Mare Pacifico.*" I think it right to reply in

Spanish, and I add, to make myself clear: "*de l'Australie, del Sud-Africa, pour la France!*"

My reply seems to be causing much enthusiasm. The Captain waves his arms, more excited, sticks his mouth into his megaphone and shouts, in a voice of thunder:

"*Bravo! Bonné voyage a la caravella de Colombo!*"

We salute. The patrol boat salutes.

Ouf! And I thought that there were none but savages left in Europe. What a mistake, my Papuan friends could not have behaved better.

The little steamer we had seen this morning now joins us too, she also is a patrol boat, an armed trawler, of the same type as the one I commanded in 1915 at Dunkirk and Calais; to make me look "warlike" I only had a poor little popgun of 47 in the bows. . . . This fellow has an anti-aircraft gun, but on his deck in front of the bridge there is a large gun of at least 100 mm. Doubtless it is to look more "warlike," for I have an impression that if she ever fired this gun, she would lose her funnel and unhook her propeller at one blow. Same mode of approach, same inquisitiveness, same courtesy. . . . I cannot help shouting "*Arriba España.*" Whether they be Reds or Whites, I think this cry should fit both.

Good sailing with wind on the quarter. At nightfall we round the islet to the north of Majorca 100 metres away, I hear the sea breaking on the sheer cliffs. We are doing 8 knots. In ordinary times there is a powerful lighthouse on this point; it is still there, but in the Balearic as on the coasts of Spain they are economical in lighting. The Revolution is not causing much change in the lights that we were accustomed to see on these coasts in the old days. All sailors know the saying—Spanish lights; characteristics: "Black lights with grey flashes."

A bad night. No sooner had we rounded the point,

when, sheltered by the mountain, we struck a belt of calm. I spent my watch in taking advantage of every breath that came down from the mountains to move away from the land. These breaths came every half hour, lasted three minutes and each time came from a different quarter.

*Sunday, 15th May*

Calm. Sunbathed!

*16th May*

The sky is clouding over: rain, squalls, thunderstorms. The weather tries to be fierce; it is a bit late to try and impress the *Kaimiloa*; she has seen worse things!

The sky clears towards midnight. The gusts cease; calm again.

*17th May*

Fine clear weather this morning: notice the coast of Spain 35 miles to the north-west: Barcelona and Cape Creuz.

At noon Tati calls me:

"They're firing at us, Captain, I can see the splashes of the shells."

I jump on to the deck, I strain my eyes; to be sure I see presently some splashes of water rising far away: one, two, three, four . . . False alarm, Tati is too young to have seen shells bursting on the sea around him, but he might perhaps have noticed that what he took to be exploding shells closely resembled waterspouts ejected by whales.

Calm all night.

*19th May*

When I get up, the sea is still asleep. Dead flat!—A

little catspaw is tickling its surface to wake it up a little! Merry companies of porpoises are leaping around us, and, after showing us all they can do in the way of somersaults, disappear towards the north: do they mean, in their own way, to give us a lead, and show us that France lies over there?

The little catspaws die away and revive. The *Kaimiloa* points north-east to reconnoitre Sicié to the south of Toulon.

A whale emerges to starboard.

"She must be the one that was prowling around the boat this morning," Tati informs me.

She's a monster: I didn't know that there were such big whales in the Mediterranean.

My mate explains to me that, at daybreak, when he was squatting at the edge of the platform and carrying out the daily rite of his intestinal functions, that whale, emerging close enough to touch him, had disrespectfully blown . . . almost up his nose!

The wind freshens; this evening it is blowing a gale; the sky is overcast; fine rain.

God, how dark the night is! I hope the land of France is still where it was twelve years ago! With such a sea and on such a night it would be a dirty trick if she had drifted away forty miles to the south.

It's nasty and damp and cold. I shut myself up in the cabin with my "calculations" and I only poke my nose out every ten minutes just to see that we are still alone at sea.

*Saturday, 20th May*

I have put nothing down in this notebook for the last three days; I am too excited!

First came the landfall, no end of a joke!

For the last two days I had taken no sights: grey



weather, no visibility, swinish weather. We are approaching land, without knowing for certain what our average rate of progress has been: veritable land-lubber's navigation! We have been going north, generally speaking.

"By going north," says Tati, "we are bound to get somewhere, since we are in the Mediterranean."

Of course! So would we by going east, west or south!

In a most haphazard way I have estimated that we must be somewhere in the neighbourhood of Toulon. There's fine astronomical navigation for you! All the same, I who spent my night in making nautical computations with altitudes taken six months ago might at least have taken one little bearing in order to make an accurate last landfall. To tell the truth I had never thought that the haze, the rain, the grey weather, and that heavy bank of clouds to the north could have hidden from me the coasts of France to that extent.

We are getting nearer and nearer, unable to see more than a quarter of a mile away. Towards 5 o'clock in the evening the sea suddenly changes colour. The coast can't be very far away! But what part of the coast? I glance at the general chart which I possess; logically, at the approach to Toulon, only the Bauquières Shallows could show such a change of colour in the water. Half an hour later, in the mist, we spot a little trawler fishing. No need to take a sounding; if this trawler is fishing, then the depth must be right for fishing! We pass astern of her.

"Toulon?" I shout.

"That way!" they reply pointing vaguely to the east.

That's all right, I thought, we are on the Bauquières Shallows. It happens that the wind has just veered

during a squall and seems to be settling in gusts to the north-west. Perfect: that means a nice little blow from the mistral; it is going to clear away the fog. We bear away pointing east. At nightfall, the mist that has been hiding the coast is lifting. A luminous beam projects its diffused light on the horizon, slightly over the port bow; I count the flashes: one, two, five seconds . . . I know no lighthouse with that rhythm in the neighbourhood of Toulon. What can it mean? Is it possible that my *Brown's Nautical Almanac* is not up to date? That would surprise me on the part of the English. Abeam, the horizon clears, and a fresh light shows up, spreads out, lighting up a whole corner of the sky. There's no doubt about it, there is a big town over there. And if it isn't Toulon. . . . Why! then, but, *péchère*, it's Marseille, and the lighthouse is Planier!

There's navigation for you!

I am laughing somewhat at the face that Tati will pull presently, when I wake him and tell him the news. This evening, after meeting the trawler, we thought we had spotted in the mist a line which we had both decreed must be the land, and immediately, as had been agreed when we left Tangier, we had taken out the bottle of champagne whose cork was to fly as soon as the land of France showed up. We had drunk it merrily. It may have been land, but certainly not the land we thought it was.

What we need now is to make good way.

"Don't ease off, lad!" The north-westerly breeze is now blowing "*à décorner les cocus*." Never mind! I keep every stitch of canvas on: the bamboos in the mainsail are groaning under the effort; if they break we will attend to it. At times we are doing ten knots. I can see Planier emerging from the horizon, sweeping across us on the beam, and disappearing behind us.

What a sight the *Kaimiloa* must be, driving towards harbour in a cloud of spray.

I interrupt my contemplation: something has given way in the rigging: it's the mainstay which has just gone with a loud crack. Another crack, more impressive, wood this time, soon follows. Several bamboos in the mainsail have ended their career! The broken stay with its chain and spring, falls on the cabin roof, just above Tati's bunk. My mate pokes his head out through the half open door:

"I heard a bang," he informs me.

"You've said it," I think. "It's nothing," I say, "it's the windward stay . . . then a few bamboos"; and to complete my little sensation: "You know, Toulon? Yes? Well, it's Marseille!"

He slams the door and dons his oilskins, bounding up on the platform as if the stay spring had just relaxed under his posterior:

"Marseille, you say?"

"Yes, and that light behind us, well it's Planier!"

Soon he seems to get scared at the mad pace at which we are racing.

"Say you go and have a rest?" he advises me.

I accept with enthusiasm: for the last two nights I haven't closed an eye: not because of the weather nor through worrying about navigation, but in the excitement of arriving, of arriving in France after twelve years of absence.

"What is the course?" he asks.

"Crabwise, from rock to rock, following the coast; all safe anyhow, well lit up . . . and the weather has cleared."

I lie down, I think I shall be able to sleep, but I can't. I can hear Tati lowering the mainsail and repairing the stay; good lad!

A little later I hear him shout to a steamer, which is passing a little too close:

"Can't you change your course, eh! You son of a bitch?"

After three hours of vain attempts to look for sleep, I get up: it is daylight; we have covered some ground, the deuce! The weather is now very clear. . . . The mistral has cleared the sky and the land.

I lie down again, and this time am about to sink into oblivion, when Tati shouts to me:

"Come and look! The fleet [*l'escadre*] is coming out of Toulon!"

He pronounces "*l'escadde*" with the respectful intonation of all Bretons.

I no longer think of resting. My memory goes back to Toulon. That old Toulon which I knew only in war-time: the Toulon full of charm, where strange traditions were not yet extinct; my memories become more precise. At this very moment the *Kaimiloa* must be on the spot which beheld, during one of my earliest flights as an observer aboard a seaplane, a nasty corkscrew dive of 800 metres; of the pilot nothing was seen but a torn arm floating in a life-jacket, and a few minutes later a mass of puffy purple flesh squeezed into a life-jacket, but all there; I recall the magnificent action, related to me later, of the observer-mechanic of the second machine, who flung himself into the water to support that shapeless bundle that was I, until the arrival of a torpedo-boat; then the transfer to the hospital of Saint-Mandrier (which I think I can spot over there behind Sicié near the hollow of Saint-Georges), the rush of doctors who wanted to hang me up by the feet, pull out my tongue, deflate my bursting stomach, then, disgusted with so much useless gymnastics, going away half an hour later, decreeing: "Poor devil! He's done for!"

I think too of that noble woman, the ward sister, whose house I think I can spot over there on the hills of Tamaris, Madame Sauvaire Jourdan, who, left alone with that drowned man, his crushed limbs, and his split skull, worked at pulling at his tongue and at re-deflating his stomach "just to keep her hand in." And a few minutes later, surprised to see a light mist on the mirror that she was holding out to him, she called in all the doctor-rabble, shouting: "Your corpse, doctors! Your corpse isn't dead!"

No, it wasn't dead. And to-day, twenty-two years later, I have a clear impression that it's in pretty good health.

I have to interrupt my reverie. It isn't the fleet that is coming out, but a cruiser; she is going to pass astern of us: the *Kaimiloa's* French ensign dips slowly three times, as slowly as possible in order to show the respect it owes to the illustrious navy of France. But (and my heart is deeply hurt) that fine unit of the navy of France passes by, lofty and scornful!

Poor little *Kaimiloa*, how small you must look, seen from the top of that big bridge; they didn't see you. That big modern brother is so mighty with his funnels spitting fire, with his machinery and all his scrap iron that maybe he thinks himself entitled to despise you a little. Besides it is called *Pluton*. So you see? Pluto, that is his god and that god is certainly jealous of yours which is called "*Æolus*." But don't you worry; I prefer a thousand times the song of your *Æolus* modulating like the song of a harp along your bamboos, to the clatter of anvils that emerges from the coarse interior of your brother Pluto.

Another warship is approaching us to port, preceded by a submarine.

We repeat our salute. Ah! These boats know their manners; they don't even wait for our courteous gesture before returning it; at the same time as the *Kaimiloa's* ensign is dipping from her masthead, theirs is dipping from their mizzen gaff.

A pretty yacht, with sails furled, is working up into the mistral under power, flying the flag of the Yacht Club of France, she passes us to starboard: the owner, his guests and the crew, all grouped astern, give us an ovation.

But ye gods! How these boats are rolling and pitching in that poor little mistral sea! It almost makes me seasick to look at them!

The submarine is not satisfied with a superficial glance. She follows us, draws near, slows down. The Commander, his staff and a few members of the crew are grouped on the conning-tower; they follow us at the same rate for some minutes, then increasing speed, carry on with us a few metres to starboard.

The Commander hails us:

"My congratulations!"

I shout to him "Long live France!" We salute each other again. She goes round us, comes up again, misses us by a few metres.

"We are going to Cannes," I say.

"Yes, we know! They are expecting you there!"

In company, we enter the little channel of the Salins d'Hyères, between Giens and Porquerolle; this time I am not exaggerating, she is keeping only three metres off; what a photo this would have made: the very latest modern boat together with the last song of a navy of legend! The Commander is handling his boat with rare calm and mastery. *He* is not afraid of causing any damage! He is not of the calibre of many of his fellows, for whom their years of command are nothing but a

difficult point to be rounded, and who have only one goal, that of finishing their career without any mishap; and to that end they avoid any manœuvre that is in the least daring: henceforth they are officially and definitely marked down as: first-rate commanders, quite good seamen!

Commander of the submarine *Thétys*, what I am about to predict may appear idiotic, but if the devil will have it that France be dragged into another war, you will be of those who know how to write new glorious pages in the book of our navy; you appeared to me to be the soul of your ship—frankly, a sailor; to-morrow you may well be the soul of a squadron, for a soul is needed to be victorious at sea. Look here, if I were the Minister of Marine, as soon as hostilities break out, I would send many of our admirals to do gardening, and change the course of their stars by sticking them on sleeves like yours!

She steams alongside, working round, returns four or five times, no doubt to enable the whole of her crew to see that little boat from Polynesia flying the colours of France. Those on watch in the engine-room are relieved at every evolution, for they too must be allowed to see.

Good Commander, thank you from ourselves, thank you from the *Kaimiloa*!

I am getting more and more nervy; we are going at a grand pace! The sea, sometimes pretty hard, is breaking as she takes us astern. What surprises the crew of the submarine is that we have no one at the tiller. The plucky little boat is steering herself, without the least yawing . . . no "sperry" here, but a boat well trimmed in her hull and in her canvas, with bits of inner tube acting as springs on the tiller tackle; I admit that her appearance is neither very modern nor very shipshape, but as the Americans say, it works anyway!

After twelve years of absence I see again the whole coast passing before my eyes; a few more country houses, but still as beautiful, ever the same; every yard brings up memories which I thought forgotten. And by living them again I am a little surprised at having ever lived them before; how the sea can change a fellow!

Between the eastern extremity of the island of Levant and the Camarat lighthouse, the wind fails us. Calm is prolonged to nightfall. We have lost the westerly wind and from the east a little steamer is coming towards us with a following wind. There is a contest between the two contrary winds: heavy clouds are piling up above our heads. To be becalmed so near harbour!

Thank heaven all these clouds, with an accompaniment of thunder and lightning flashes, collapse on top of us. What rain! Rain of the "Doldrums." This lasts all night. But there is a little breeze in that water, enough to enable us to round Camarat, to round it in queer fashion moreover—shut up in the cabin and the tiller lashed. The *Kaimiloa*, for her last lap, is bent on steering more intelligently than ever; perhaps, knowing that our wretched oilskins are only waterproof in name, she doesn't want us to arrive in France having caught colds.

The rain is so dense that the powerful luminous beam of the lighthouse no longer reaches us. But before the storm I had taken some sound bearings, and the course which the *Kaimiloa* is following turns out on the whole to be perfectly safe.

Estimating that we have rounded the point I feel ready to fall asleep standing up: my head is on fire. Is it the excitement of arrival? I would so much like to rest for an hour. I lie down for a moment.

"If you hear a great shock," I say laughingly to Tati, "it's because we are not clearing the rocks at the point!"



"We shall be back in France all the same," he replies.

I manage to doze for two hours and wake feeling more refreshed. The sky has cleared as the day breaks; in the morning mist I recognize on our beam Agay, with its viaduct, the red rocks, and over there straight ahead, an escalade of white country-houses. Cannes! The sky clears still more: to starboard there rises the little triangle of la Garoupe and the islands of Lérins, enclosing as in a jewel case the bay of Théoule, . . . France! This is France! Is it possible?

Tati and I go from one cabin to the other, crossing the platform aimlessly in both directions. He must feel as I do; I have a sudden impression that the *Kaimiloa* has grown too small; that for the first time I am a prisoner within her planks; I should love to be able to run ashore, to fly away!

Oh! "Æolus", dear god of the winds, just a little effort; sing for the last time in our sails so that we may show the people of France the worth of the Polynesian double canoes of legend.

Noon.

We are dragging along. Just now a 'plane passed over our heads. A fine rain is falling softly. Not knowing what to do with ourselves, we make a semblance of tidying up aboard, and we throw overboard a collection of old mildewed garments, bits of planking of no further use, worn lengths of rope, empty boxes. . . . All this rubbish floats around us stupidly on the calm sea.

We suddenly remember that we haven't shaved, so we beautify ourselves. God, how long these last few miles are!

We are now within 500 metres of the jetty and the

calm is flatter than ever. We spin round and round. I . . . who dreamt of an arrival in style! With my glasses I search every corner of the town; I no longer recognize the Croisette; there have been lots of changes over there, in the direction of the Carlton; there are a lot of new villas stuck up on the Californie. I hope they haven't spoilt their elegant little harbour, sleeping at the foot of the old town!

The sky is grey. A fine rain. Sad Côte d'Azur! The town seems deserted. We have been here for an hour. Nothing is stirring!

"They're expecting you at Cannes," the Commander of the *Thétys* had told us. What a humbug!

And not a breath of wind, and the bamboos of the mainsail beating listlessly along the mast . . . and my heart beating fit to burst in my chest!

## Chapter XVIII

### IN THE GOOD TOWN OF CANNES

UNDER a lowering sky, Cannes, in a grey mist of fine rain, looks like an abandoned town. Tati regards the land with wide eyes, and can't make it out:

"Is this the Côte d'Azur?" he says to me. "From what you used to say I had formed quite a different idea of it; this isn't a patch on Trinité-sur-Mer! And that famous yacht harbour of which you never ceased speaking? And what about the yachts? Where are they? If there are any, they must be the sort that are afraid of getting wet! The people aren't very inquisitive either!"

"Not very inquisitive?"

"Well! We have been going round in circles here for the last two hours, becalmed 200 metres from the jetties, and not a soul has come to have a closer look at us! Yet we must look like a phantom ship, with our two hulls and our bamboo sails!"

I cannot find anything to say. I am as disappointed as he is. I had pictured such a fine triumphant entry before a strong mistral and under a clean swept sky!

At that moment, a little puff from the west makes our sails quiver. A bright spot shows to the north, marking the background of the hills of Mougins; a corner of grey mist is torn away above the Californie, unveiling a trail of blue sky. Through that gap there peers a clear ray of sunshine which, joyfully, tumbles downhill and seems to run towards the *Kaimiloa*, passing over the harbour.

Miracle! Under that caress of light, the whole town wakes up and smiles.

Human beings are beginning to form groups at the ends of the jetties, others are running along the Croisette.

A motor-launch, laden to the point of sinking, is making for us!

"We are sent by the Committee of Welcome," says one of the passengers as they approach.

"The Committee of Welcome?" I ask surprised.

"Yes, the committee entrusted with organizing your reception."

"A reception for us?" exclaims Tati. "We shall have to put on shoes then?"

The launch comes alongside, everybody leaps aboard, congratulates us on our "exploits," staring at us as if we had fallen from another planet.

I listen absent-mindedly. I cannot take my eyes away from this corner of France. At last I recognize it now that it is quivering with light. Now that the sky has become blue again; I also gaze at the crowd which is increasing in numbers, getting excited, uttering cries of welcome, hurrahs.

We land at the quay; the "delegation" of the committee want to keep us on the quay. The Harbour Master lends a hand. A reporter from *Paris-Soir*, the great newspaper in which, under the signature of M. Henri Danjou, there have just appeared a series of long articles on the "extraordinary adventure of the two Frenchmen," is here to gather the very latest information.

I take him aside: "Tell me, what is this reception committee?"

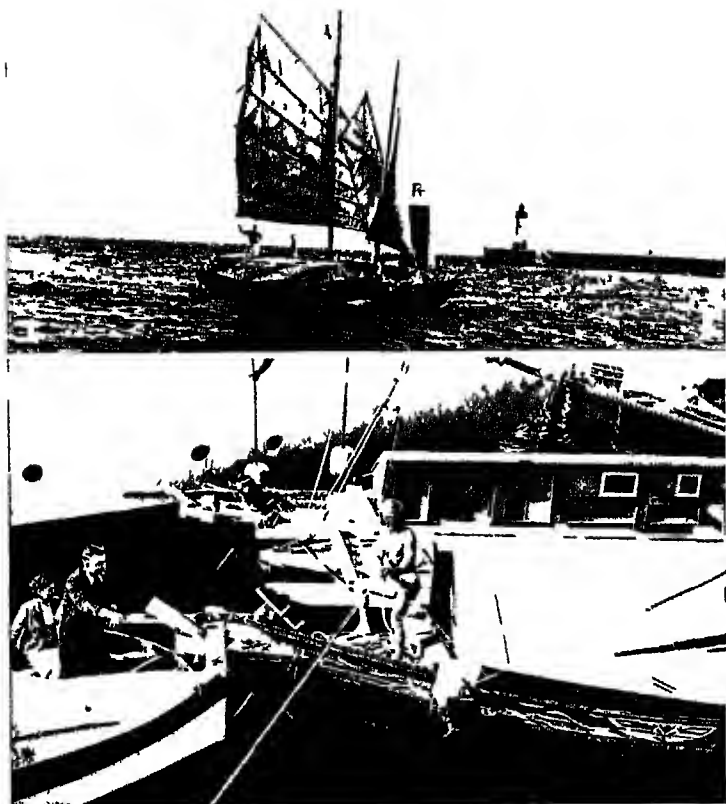
"Why, don't you know? The town of Cannes wants to receive you officially!"

"Officially?"



THERE WAS A STRONG EASTERLY BREEZE ON THE DAY OF DEPARTURE

THE " KAIMILOA " MAKES HER ENTRY INTO THE WORLD.



THE "KAIMILOA" ENTERING CANNES HARBOUR AT THE END OF  
THE VOYAGE

CAPTAIN DE BISSCHOP COMES ALONGSIDE FOR THE LAST TIME

"Yes! And the Minister of Marine is going to send a despatch boat to-morrow, a squadron of hydroplanes. The harbour will be beflagged. They are going to fire twenty-one guns!"

"Twenty-one guns?"

"Yes, the Mayor of Cannes is going to receive you with the Prefect. The procession will go to the town-hall where a *champagne d'honneur* will be served. Then, after you have signed the golden book, there will be speeches!"

"Speeches?"

"Yes, yes! But why the devil did you arrive so quickly? We weren't expecting you for two or three days."

"Too quickly, you say? Fourteen days! Well! Do you know that the *Kaimiloa* did the trip from Sourabaya to Capetown in fifty-nine days? At that rate we could have done Tangier-Cannes in five days!"

I cannot get used to the idea of all this fuss and of this official reception. The reporter reassures me:

"Everything is prepared, organized, you can't get out of it. They will probably ask you, tomorrow or the day after, to make a false exit so as to make a fresh arrival!"

I think I recognize faces of a few friends upon the quay, twelve years older, who are smiling at me; a few spectators call to me whom I don't recognize at all: "At last, here you are again, Eric!"

I beseech the Harbour Master not to tie up the *Kaimiloa* at the quay but to anchor her in the middle of the harbour, I have need of peace! The friendly reporter then asks me what he can do to please me now: I beg him to be good enough to telephone as quickly as possible to my old mother who was so afraid that she would die without having seen me again, to my sisters

and to other very dear creatures who are awaiting me at Nice.

An hour later all these people whom I have found again carry me off, weeping with joy. To them I seem to have returned from another world. A world far more distant than that of the Oceanian Islands! In the course of those twelve years of absence they had so often believed that I had gone on the great voyage from which there is no returning. They had so often believed me to be the victim of the Chinaman's stake, the cannibal's cook-shop or the jaws of a shark!

\* \* \*

A few months after the arrival of the *Kaimiloa* in France, in the course of a lecture which I gave before the Geographical Society of Paris, I concluded with these words:

"That return voyage to France had but little scientific interest for me; it was but a long-distance run without any useful purpose!

"Without useful purpose. Maybe I exaggerate a little, for the acclamations of the Americans of Honolulu which greeted the little *Kaimiloa* on her departure, those of the Australians of Torres Straits, of the Dutchmen of Java, of the Englishmen and the Afrikanders of the Cape, who saw her arrive and leave again to the enthusiastic shouts of 'Vive La France!' are perhaps not without importance. . . .

"To the cries of 'Vive La France' and yet, we had left without an ensign, officially at any rate. Should they bestow an ensign upon a 'double coffin' which, in the opinion of all the naval authorities, was to break in pieces as soon as it reached the open sea? May my country and its maritime laws forgive me for having nevertheless hoisted the three colours when we started!



"After twelve years of absence, I saw again, in May of this year, my sweet land . . . and the sweet land, represented by the good town of Cannes, gave the *Kaimiloa* a grandiose reception, the recollection of which still moves me.

"And receiving the acclamations of the crowd, the official greetings of my country, I thought to myself that the plucky little boat had been worthy of the confidence I had placed in her. When we left Honolulu I said to her: 'It is up to you now to win your nationality . . . to impose it upon the world!'

"Yes, I repeat, Ladies and Gentlemen, if we succeeded in carrying out these voyages, and that in a worthy manner, it is because I knew that in France thoughts, what am I saying? hearts, were following us. First of all those of our admirable Geographical Society which was kind enough, at the start, to have confidence in me and to place my expedition under its high patronage. Those too of the greatest of Frenchmen and of his wife, M. le Maréchal Pétain and Mme la Maréchale.

"A few hours after the arrival of the *Kaimiloa* two telegrams were handed to me. One said:

"'Geographical Society proud of your great success, sends you sincere, lively and cordial congratulations on your marvellous voyage with the hope of welcoming you soon in Paris.'

"The other in the concise phrasing we all know:

"'Bravo, Eric, I am proud of you.'

*Signed: Pétain*

"Well! Allow me to ask you, Ladies and Gentlemen, which of you would not willingly start, would not joyfully endure the same trials and sufferings, to receive, on his return, two telegrams like those!"

## EPILOGUE

TWO years ago, on the beach of bright sand on which the *Kaimiloo* was being born, a woman had said to me:

"Go without fear upon this boat of legend, upon this boat of my fathers. Go with faith and you will cross the seas victoriously, and you will arrive, since such is this day the goal of your voyage, at the distant shores of your land of France!"

And in a lower tone she had added:

"Perhaps then you will again leave your distant country to return to our islands, in pursuit of our dream."

This is why another boat of legend, the *Kaimiloo-Wakea*, following the road of Destiny, will soon hoist her sail, and steer with faith towards the blue waters of the great mysterious Ocean. . . .

And her sail will shelter two dreams . . . two dreams that will be the same!